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ON METAPHYSICAL POETRY

IN literary criticism the adjective *metaphysical,* like the noun *metaphysics* in philosophy, has had a busy life. It has assumed new meanings before casting off the old, and the separation of old from new is not at all easy. I believe that such a separation is nevertheless desirable: for, though we may not be saying much when we say that a poem is metaphysical, it is as well to know exactly (if we can) what the little is we are saying.

Hobbes in philosophy dismissed new meanings as merely nonsense: 'the term signifieth as much as the books written, or placed after, Aristotle's *Physics.*' Such a proceeding, however tempting, is no longer possible; not, at any rate, in criticism. For nowadays, I think, there is felt to be about the adjective *metaphysical* a peculiar fitness for the description of a certain kind of poetry, of which the norm is Donne's; and, whatever this fitness may be, it is not to be discovered by an investigation of origins. It was perceived neither by Johnson when he popularized the adjective as a critical term, nor by Dryden when he suggested it.

Johnson had little metaphysics, and much of what he called metaphysical poetry we should now immediately dispose of under other names. We shall glance at it later; here it need not delay us. Dryden, on the other hand, was more cultured, and noticed that in Donne metaphysical propositions are to be found. In this he saw rather a reason for chiding, than for praise: Donne, he says, 'perplexes the mind of the fair sex with nice speculations of philosophy, when he should engage their hearts, and entertain them with the softnesses of love.' It would be strange if a term were felt peculiarly apt for the description of a major poet, when it described, not a source of his strength, but his weakness. Not all, however, would agree with Dryden that there is a weakness here; and a simpler reflection will suffice. It is that metaphysical propositions occur, not only in the poetry of Donne, but in that of (say) Parmenides and Lucretius among the ancients; in Guinizelli, Dante and Petrarch among the medievals; in Elizabethans like Sir John Davies and Chapman; even in Romantics like Shelley and Wordsworth. Some critics have used the

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term *metaphysical* with as wide a reference as this ; some, I believe, have said that all great poetry is metaphysical. But that is the abuse of a term. To say that Donne is metaphysical is not to say that he is great. It is an endeavour to distinguish the way in which he is great, if he is so, from other forms of greatness. It is, however, an unsuccessful endeavour if it is the same as saying that in his work metaphysical propositions are to be found. For it is not thereby he is distinguished from poets like Parmenides, Petrarch and Shelley.

The phrase, *metaphysical proposition*, is a wide one: to some people it may suggest the ejaculation of a theosophist, to others an axiom from *Principia Mathematica*. If it is made more definite, may it not provide us with the means of distinction we require? Dante and Lucretius, for example, are poets in whom metaphysical propositions abound, and they have frequently been held to be very like Donne—to be, in fact, metaphysical poets *par excellence*. May not they, and Donne, use a particular type of metaphysical proposition, which distinguishes them from Parmenides and Shelley? This, I believe, is an opinion which has frequently been held ; but I know of no one who has succeeded in the isolation which it demands of a type of metaphysical proposition. Such a task is one upon which any man may well be reluctant to engage. And I doubt whether it would even be profitable to do so. For to me Dante and Lucretius, together with the lesser lights of the *dolce stil nuovo*, together even with Chapman, seem not very like, but very different from Donne. Later I will endeavour to make clear what seems to me the nature of this difference ; here, as we are discussing metaphysical propositions in poetry, I will only refer to an observation, which I think is just, already made by Professor Praz. It is, that if metaphysical propositions occur in Lucretius, in Dante and in Donne, they occur in Donne in a peculiar way. Whereas Dante and Lucretius take seriously the propositions they quote, Donne does not do so: he quotes them, not as themselves true, but as possibly useful for inducing a belief in something else, which he believes is true. His concern is not with the incorruptibility of pure substances, but with the union of his soul with his mistress's: it is of this that he is convinced, and of this alone does he wish to convince his reader. Professor Praz states his distinction in terms that seem to me not wholly fortunate—they suggest a frivo-

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lous attitude to important matters, which I do not find in Donne—nevertheless, I heartily approve of the distinction being made. Dante and Lucretius, it is true, devote themselves to the exposition of a metaphysical system, or of parts of it ; and Donne does not. That being so, it becomes at least an open question whether a search for a type or types of proposition common to them all can be of any value, even if it is successful. The use to which they are to put this type or types, when found, would seem to demand at least a prior study.

Even that, however, I do not propose to make. For one thing—and this is a confession which, out of deference to what I think is a widely-held superstition, I have postponed as long as I may—it seems to me that the number of quotations Donne makes from the metaphysicians has been exaggerated. Further—this is a more important, though more contentious, point—there has also been exaggeration of the significance of such quotations as he does make for the poems in which they occur. I cannot hope to prove this now ; to do so must be the task of what remains of my paper. My third point, however, should be immediately clear: it is, that if the use made by Donne of such propositions as he does quote at all resembles that which Professor Praz says it is, it cannot be of importance to our present investigation. This starts from the assumption that Donne is felt to be very aptly called metaphysical. A man who pulls down houses, as such, is not felt to be aptly called an architect. If Donne merely plays ducks and drakes with metaphysics, we may as well abandon our investigation ; we shall find a perfectly satisfactory account of him in Johnson.

I am therefore forced upon my own resources. This is unfortunate, for the country I have to cross is very extensive, and it is already marked with a multitude of tracks made for any purpose but my own. I will do what I can to follow one track but, if I make unnecessary detours, I must beg my reader's indulgence. My problem at the moment is to know which track to choose to set out on. Perhaps the safest is an opening that discussion I have already proposed, of the differences between Dante and Lucretius on the one hand, and Donne on the other.

Mr. Herbert Read, in a paper on the nature of metaphysical poetry—in which, I must admit, he supported a thesis contra-

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dictory of my own—said of Dante: 'the world was not a problem to him.' Nor was the world a problem to Lucretius. To Donne, the world is full of problems. And this remains true, though the world with which Donne is concerned is that of flesh and blood; while Lucretius is familiar with atoms, with the vacuum, with gods, and Dante with heaven and hell. To Donne the most important things that exist are himself and his mistress, the most important relation between them the everyday one of love. Lucretius's atoms fall through space, swerve, combine fortuitously to a universe, mind appears and disappears again; Dante finds excellence in hell, cruelty is exerted by the supreme love, heaven is extended and has no extent. Yet it is Donne's verse that is disturbed, and his lines that are the battleground between the difficulty of belief and the reluctance to doubt. Lucretius is bellicose, Dante submissive; but both have an assured peace. This is a gross contrast between the poets; but, for the moment, I leave it as such. It provides me with the starting-point I was seeking.

For I think it can be said, of both Dante and Lucretius, that they were not so much themselves metaphysicians, as the disciples of metaphysicians; and disciples have a way of being more certain than their masters. There is, for example, an obvious contrast between Thomism as one meets it in Dante, and as one finds it in Thomas himself. To the lips of those who know Thomas only through Dante, or through compendiums devised for the study of the *Commedia*, there rises inevitably one adjective for the description of his work: the adjective 'neat.' There is, of course, a neatness about Thomas: one of language, which has scarcely, if ever, been rivalled. But his thought, or any fragment of that thought, is rich, suggestive and haunting. It has a thousand ramifications, of all of which the mind is to some degree aware, few of which it can clearly grasp and follow, and these perhaps not to their very end; further, they are fine and interpenetrating, so that they seem to be alive. When encountered for the tenth or perhaps the twentieth time, they do not impair the unity of Thomas's work: but that unity is still rather felt, than displayed before one, and seen. It is the unity of a vast and not simultaneously demonstrable whole; persuasive in its way, but demanding almost any other adjective for its description, than neat. To say

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this is not, I think, to say anything to Thomas's discredit. For, if it is discredit, then he shares it with all great metaphysicians. In their work, there is the pursuit rather than the attainment of truth ; and such value as their work possesses seems to depend wholly on the pursuit. Or, to vary the metaphor (since pursuit without at least the hope of attainment does not seem very intelligible), the value depends on what is held in suspension in their thought, rather than on what is precipitated. Once precipitation takes place, it loses in value ; nor has the precipitate a value which makes up for the loss. Yet it is this precipitate that the disciples collect, and of it they make their ' neat ' display.

I am aware that at first sight there does not seem to be a great resemblance between Donne's turbulence, springing from his being full of problems, and what we may call Thomas's subtlety or elusiveness. Later I shall suggest that both spring from the same cause ; and that the difference between the two, great as it is, is no greater than one would expect, given the very different aims that Donne and Thomas pursue. Here, leaving aside for the moment profounder speculation, I wish to establish one point merely: that turbulence in Donne, elusiveness in Thomas—both are signs of something very different from the certainty to be found in Dante and Lucretius. Lacking such a certainty, Donne resembles Dante's master much more than does Dante himself ; in one respect at least, therefore, he is, more properly than Dante, called *metaphysical*. The question rises, whether this respect is important enough to merit consideration. And I think it is. For I am not suggesting a resemblance between Donne and Thomas in the possession of a negative quality merely. I do not believe that anyone who lacks certainty, who is puzzled and therefore in his account of his studies puzzling—for instance, the cross-word fanatic or the half-wit—is for that reason to be called metaphysical. Metaphysics is ' puzzling,' if I may retain the homely word, in a peculiar way. It is not that, to the matters it studies, there is an abundance of clues, so that the mind is lost among them ; or that there is a shortage of clues, so that the mind is left hesitant ; but rather, that such clues as there are, while equally trustworthy, are contradictory. And again, I do not mean that they are contradictory as are, say, pleas in a law-court. A judge is puzzled if he has before him two chains of

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evidence, one tending to prove that a certain person was in a certain spot at a certain time, the other that he was not. In cases like this, the contradiction rests upon accidents merely: it is compatible with the nature of the person whose movements are being considered, either that he was, or that he was not at the given spot. The contradictions in metaphysics, on the other hand, spring from essence. The very nature of things brings them forth. It seems impossible that the nature of things should possess either the one or the other of a pair of qualities ; it seems impossible that it should possess both together: it seems impossible that it should not possess both. Concern with problems of this kind gives a quite peculiar air of being puzzled ; it is only in possession of this air, and not of any other, that I wish to say Donne and Thomas resemble each other.

I should like to give this air a name—say, the *metaphysical note* ; describe it generally, as that it is a note of tension, or strain ; and merely affirm that it is to be found in Donne. The note is so distinctive that, once it is perceived, it is impossible not to recognize it again ; and I am willing to trust my own judgment in the matter. But others would not ; and fortunately there is, I think, other and more obviously firmer ground on which I can rest my case. This is an enumeration of the subjects of Donne's greater poems. For problems of the kind mentioned in the last paragraph are not infinite in number or variety. It has been held, indeed, that there is only one of them:* the problem of the Many and the One, as old as Plato, but still, the argument goes, the concern of metaphysics. This is probably true ; but whether true or not does not much affect my case. For, whether the problems discussed by metaphysics in its long history are or are not derived from that of the Many and the One, they resemble it in the nature of their difficulty, and they are restricted in number. At times the individual has fought against, and depended upon, its fellow individual, much as multiplicity unity ; or the individual has fought against the universal ; or against the universe, or against God. Or the here-now has risen up against its natural ally the then-there, and both have risen up against eternity. Or the spirit, partaking of the universal, has had nothing to do with the flesh ; and the flesh, primed with the certainty of the here-now, has dismissed the spirit as a fable. And so on. I do not wish to give,

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nor indeed am I capable of giving, a complete list. The existence of problems of this kind is well known, their general nature, I hope, clear. Should anyone however make such a list, I am sure that in it would be found every one of the subjects of Donne's greater poems. Donne does not write about many things: he is content with the identity of lovers as lovers, and their diversity as the human beings in which love manifests itself ; the stability and self-sufficiency of love, contrasted with the mutability and dependence of human beings ; with the presence of lovers to each other, their physical unity, though they are separated by travel, and by death ; the spirit demanding the succour of the flesh, the flesh hampering the spirit ; the shortcomings of this life, summarized by decay and death, contrasted with the divine to which it aspires.

Donne's choice of subjects may of course have been dictated by chance, and a quality they have in common may be no sign of a quality common in his poetry. But I prefer to ignore this possibility ; and taking my courage in my hands, to venture upon my own definition of metaphysical verse. It is, that verse properly called metaphysical is that to which the impulse is given by an overwhelming concern with metaphysical problems ; with problems either deriving from, or closely resembling in the nature of their difficulty, the problem of the Many and the One. The definition sounds spare, but that I do not look upon as a defect. It is at any rate fairly clear. I would point out that it is by no means improbable, but rather the reverse, that poetry of the kind postulated by the definition should exist. For metaphysics, while highly abstract, is by the very reason of its high degree of abstraction intimately concerned with the concrete. It concerns everything, because it studies reality, not in this or that thing, but in everything or, as the phrase goes, ' in itself.' It is impossible to take a single step in any direction, without brushing against metaphysics. Now reality is a word of great emotional significance. Before a thing can completely command a man's attention, he must be assured at least of this about it, that it is real. To most people, of course, this assurance is not difficult to obtain ; others, aware of a difficulty, do not find their daily life disturbed thereby. They are the metaphysicians, who like any other scientist, distinguish clearly the problem to which they devote their professional hours from

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the immediate problems of living. It is conceivable, however, that there should be a few who, aware of the difficulty of metaphysical problems, see them lurking behind any action, however trivial, they propose. Such people will be in a state of great disturbance or at least excitement. Such excitement may well be an impulse to poetry, and the poetry it generates be metaphysical. Such a course of events, I repeat, is at least possible. From the example of Donne I am convinced not only that it is possible, but that it has occurred.

A definition, if a sound one, enables the student to give more satisfactory accounts of the things it purports to define. It has been led up to by the study of such things ; but, once arrived at, leads back to them and illuminates them. The definition I have proposed does this I think with the poems of Donne. Take for example *The Good Morrow,* which now usually stands at the head of the *Songs and Sonnets*. I am relieved, in the accounts I give of it to myself, to feel myself no longer obliged to attach prime importance to the last three lines, where the mention of a metaphysical doctrine—the incorruptibility of pure substances—occurs. The doctrine seems to me more or less extraneous to the poem, hanging on to it as a grace, perhaps not in the best fashion ; and it is brought in so late—the poem, in my opinion, being for most purposes over before the last three lines are reached. What stands in the foreground of my attention are the two hemispheres in the lovers' eyes, dependent on each other, and together making up a world ; the conceit of the little room, which is ' an everywhere ' ; or that dim time of forebeing, which is nevertheless so real that in it the lovers snorted in their den. And behind all these I see most clearly the metaphysical problem of the lovers who are two, and yet one ; who are mortals, and yet have no fear ; who are circumscribed beings, and yet a universe. This problem dictates the very plan of a poem. In the first stanza the past is considered, the time before that of Donne's love: it comes up for consideration because that love, to all appearances an earthly phenomenon, must have antecedents. Confronted with the present, however, the past cannot claim an equal reality: it must sink to the level of a fancy or a dream, that is, to a level consistent with its deriving such reality as it possesses wholly from the present. Note, however, that at the same time it is an infancy, with its gross pleasures,

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and an adult sleep, with its grosser manifestations. When we come later to study the conceit, we shall see that it is an essential property of Donne and his like to maintain as even as possible the balance between two rival claimants to reality. In the second stanza there is a shift from time to space: the present itself is considered, and in the present, while there is no question of a before, there is one of an elsewhere. Donne and his lover are themselves the world ; but also they are in ' one little room,' and outside that room there is a vigorously active world—one that, as a result of voyages of discovery, is even expanding. Yet it too, like the past into the present, is absorbed into the little room, which becomes an everywhere. In the last stanza the future is glanced at, but no more than glanced at. For those who have the convictions of the first two stanzas the future can hold no terrors. It is in connection with the future that metaphysical dogma is brought in, but brought in, now I think obviously, not to establish a conclusion, but to lend what support it can to a conclusion that is already established. Or take *A Valediction, forbidding Mourning*. That the oddity of the image of the compasses has nothing to do with the poem's being metaphysical, it is perhaps not necessary to insist ; that, however, it is very important to the poem still seems to be widely believed. Comparisons between Donne and Browning, on the ground that both use images that are unusual or at first sight unpoetical, are still common—Professor Praz, for instance, makes them. Why Browning drags the everyday and the familiar into his poetry is not always easy to see: I suspect it is the debauchee's device, of gaining interest for the habitual by giving it a new setting. In Donne the reason is always clear. The subject of this poem, for example, is again a metaphysical problem: that of the union of the lovers even when they are separated. The union is not such as would have satisfied a Romantic, in thought merely or imagination: Donne, as Courthope says, ' works by abstraction,' and is not interested in a solution of his problem resting on the fallacy of the accident. It is in the very respect in which they are separated, that he wishes to show his lovers are united. Their souls are one substance, which has the invisibility of air, but also the obvious unity of a lump of gold. It is to stress this last point that the compasses are brought in. For gold, though originally solid enough, falls under suspicion

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of being likely to vanish away, once it has been compared to air. Compasses do not vanish: they have not the remotest connection either with physical or metaphysical subtlety. Hence, once the needful subtlety has been expounded, they close the poem and symbolize it—not, however, by their oddity. Or take, finally, the two *Anniversaries*. Of these Professor Praz made a confessedly unfavourable criticism. 'Had Donne always written in this style,' he says, 'he would not rank much higher than Marino.' I think that, because of his lack of suitable definition or perhaps, because of his belief in an unfortunate one—Professor Praz is failing to see wood for the leaves. Everywhere in Donne there is much that is not metaphysical—that is connected with his activity as a satirist or as a mere wit, or that adheres to him from commerce with his age. In the *Anniversaries*, perhaps, there is a greater proportion of it than elsewhere. Read without due preparation they seem perhaps only bags of ingenious tricks. Read, however, with an adequate notion of the metaphysical in mind they reveal themselves, I think, as highly serious and tragic, as discussions of the dependence of the human on the divine, and of the chasm between the two. This indeed is what most critics have held them to be.

Four poems, especially when dismissed as curtly as I have dismissed these, are not, I know, sufficient evidence in favour of a new theory. But I do not propose to examine any more: partly because it is something that the reader, if he wishes, may do for himself; partly also, because the definition should serve more purposes than the illumination of individual poems. If it is at all adequate, there should be deducible from it some of the characters of metaphysical poetry in general. The isolation of such characters, if possible, will be very useful; and it will be the most searching test to which the definition could be put. One quality at any rate, is I think deducible from it. This is the notorious one, that metaphysical poetry is one of conceits.

First, however, I must make a distinction. The term *conceit* is freely used to cover any extravagant hyperbole, any far-fetched comparison:

> '. . . and like Antipodes in shoes
> Have shod their heads in their canoes,'

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or

> ' Immortal Maid, who though thou would'st refuse
> The name of Mother, be unto my Muse
> A Father . . .'

or

> ' She, whose face, like clouds, turns the day to night,
> Who, mightier than the sea, makes Moors seem white.'

This is not the sort of conceit whose presence in metaphysical poetry I am anxious to establish. I do not think it need occur in such poetry, or that poetry in which it occurs need be—though it sometimes is—metaphysical. I wish to distinguish it sharply from another type of conceit which, for convenience sake, I will call the *metaphysical conceit*. (I hope the name will not give the impression that I am moving in a circle: it will, I believe, reveal itself as appropriate, but for the time being should be taken as no more than a conventional mark). Examples of this type are Marvell's ' green thought in a green shade,' or the lines from *The Second Anniversary*:

> ' . . . her pure, and eloquent blood
> Spoke in her cheeks, and so distinctly wrought,
> That one might almost say, her body thought,'

Or, from *The Sun Rising* :

> ' She is all States, and all Princes, I,
> Nothing else is,'

and the apostrophe to the sun, later in the same stanza:

> ' Shine here to us, and thou art everywhere ;
> This bed thy centre is, these walls thy sphere.'

From *The Canonization* :

> ' You . . .
> Who did the whole world's soul contract, and drove
> Into the glasses of your eyes
> (So made such mirrors and such spies
> That they did all to you epitomize)
> Countries, towns, courts . . .'

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From *A Nocturnal on St. Lucy's Day* :

> ' But I am by her death (which word wrongs her)
> Of the first Nothing, the elixir grown.'

Or from *A Fever* :

> ' O wrangling schools, that search what fire
> Shall burn this world, had none the wit
> Unto this knowledge to aspire,
> That this her fever might be it? '

Let us take the simplest of them, Marvell's ' green thought.' This is a metaphor, whose two elements are thought and extension ; one of them is substituted for the other, so that thought, instead of extension, becomes the ground of colour. They have been held to be contradictorily opposed—all things falling either under extension or under thought, but none under both—so that the metaphor is more than usually startling. So too is that by which Elizabeth Drury's body thinks, or her blood is eloquent or works as does an artificer ; or that by which a lady's fever consumes the universe ; or that by which a bed becomes the world, and the walls enclosing it the solar sphere. Within them all there is high strain or tension, due to the sharpness with which their elements are opposed. So however is there within the conceits of the first group I quoted. That Antipodes should shoe their heads, or that a spotless virgin should become of all things a father, is not less but, if anything, more startling than that a thought should be green. I imagine this is why all conceits are usually spoken of as of a kind : their strangeness, so to speak, dazzles the eye to any other qualities they may possess. But, putting together the lines in which Elizabeth Drury's body is said to think, and those in which she is invited to become a father, it is surely impossible not to become aware of an important difference between the two. The first image, like the second, is startling ; but also it is plausible, satisfying, natural or—the contradiction forces itself upon me and should perhaps not be resisted—*not* startling. I mean this : that while the elements of the second figure, female virginity and fatherhood, come together only for a moment, at that moment cause surprise and perhaps pleasure, and then immediately fly apart ; body and thought, coming together, remain together. Once

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made, the figure does not disintegrate: it offers something unified and 'solid' for our contemplation which, the longer we contemplate, only grows the more solid. Similarly, I think, the mind accepts and dwells on with pleasure the conceit of a 'green thought,' or any other that I listed along with it; while it rejects immediately the Antipodes who walk with their heads. And this also should be noticed: the mind's usual way of accepting metaphors is to kill them. Language is richly stocked with metaphors taken over for daily use, which are now stone dead. If, even under such use, they do not disintegrate, that is because within them, there is no longer any tension which might cause them to do so. Within the metaphysical conceit, however, even when it is being dwelt on by the mind, tension between the elements continues. That is the most striking thing about it. As I said, it is at the same time starting and not startling. I do not like to use language of this kind; but, for the purpose of describing the metaphysical conceit, I do not see that any other could be used.

Some explanation obviously must be found. It might be suggested that, in these conceits, Donne once again, and this time Marvell with him, is 'working by abstraction': that they remove from the two elements they wish to unite, all associations that might embarass the union, which therefore endures. I do not think such an explanation will do. It does not account for the initial possibility of the union; nor does it bear in mind all the evidence. A bed, for example, has many and varied associations, yet Donne does not hesitate to link it with the universe; and, on the other hand, deprive fatherhood of all associations which might embarass, and no conceit at all remains in the three lines on Elizabeth Drury. That an immortal maid should beget a poem in the sense of inspiring it is no metaphor; or, at least, is one that has been long dead. So far as I can see, a satisfactory explanation can rest only upon the nature of the elements of the conceit. These must be such that they can enter into a solid union and, at the same time maintain their separate and warring identity. Are such things to be found? Only if reality is of a peculiar kind. But metaphysics suggests it is of this kind; for metaphysical problems rise out of pairs of opposites that behave almost exactly as do the elements of a metaphysical conceit. Take the multiplicity and unity of reality,

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for example: the multiplicity submits to the unity for its coherence, and at the same time preserves itself as multiplicity ; while the unity, without ceasing to be unity, receives from multiplicity its significance. The two support and complete, and at the same time deny, each other. Consider now ' her body thought.' Here body accepts the attribute of thought, without ceasing to be body ; and thought, persisting as such, immerses itself in body. And both gain thereby: for they appear no longer as abstractions, but as a reality that requires nothing further for its completion. Elizabeth Drury seems to us a moment of our own experience. Similarly, the green of Marvell's garden inheres in an unwonted substrate, thought ; his thought acquires a hitherto unaccustomed quality: in consequence, his experience in that garden is with us in all its fulness and freshness. If any conceit is taken, of the kind I have called metaphysical, I think it will be found that its elements are either a pair of opposites long known to metaphysics, or reducible to such a pair. In the few which I quoted there occurred, in *The Garden,* extension and thought ; in *The Anniversary,* body and spirit ; in *The Sun Rising* and *The Canonization,* the individual and the universe ; in *The Nocturnal,* privation and actuality. If that is so, the quality of the metaphysical conceit which, at the close of the last paragraph, gave us pause, need no longer appear strange ; or rather, it need no longer appear unique in its strangeness. Such strangeness as it has is only that of the world in which it is embedded. And that it should behave as it does is but to be expected from the nature of its parts. It is no association of things on account of a similarity due to an accident, as that a canoe for a moment rested upon a head ; but of things that, though hostile, in reality cry out for association with each other.

If this then is the metaphysical conceit, its connection with metaphysical poetry as I defined it is obvious. The two are built up out of the same materials. However, it is not yet fully obvious that metaphysical poetry must deal with these materials as does the conceit ; that, to deal with them all, it must have recourse to the conceit. But that becomes obvious, I think, once the method of metaphysicians themselves is considered. These abhor metaphor, for their one aim is to make reality as transparent to the intellect as possible, and metaphor is opaque to the intellect.

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Nevertheless, dealing with the materials with which the metaphysical poet deals, they cannot escape metaphor as their ultimate resource. That they do so is a commonplace of the history of philosophy: it is the accusation that Aristotle made against Plato, and that has been made against Aristotle many times since. It is the reproach that Thomas sought to avoid by that 'elusiveness' of which I spoke, weaving web after subtle web of propositions to veil a contradiction he inherited from Aristotle, but never quite succeeding. That metaphors employed by the metaphysicians must be metaphysical conceits needs, I think, only to be mentioned to be established. For they must have the character of such a conceit: within them, that is, there must be tension, while at the same time they satisfy in the unity they set up. There must be the tension, if distinctions painfully elaborated in other parts of the system are to be preserved. They must be satisfying, for the sole reason of their invention is that they should satisfy. If then, the metaphysician, in spite of his prejudices in favour of the intellect, cannot avoid the conceit; no more can the metaphysical poet. As a matter of fact, the conceit is what he seizes on straight away, for his sole purpose is to grasp reality, and intellect or sense is indifferent to him. As I said earlier of Donne, it is possible to be a metaphysical poet, and to have nothing or very little to do with metaphysical propositions.

From this point it would be profitable to go on and show how, with the aid of the metaphysical conceit, metaphysical poetry can be distinguished from the other types of poetry that have, at various times, been confused with it. Baroque poetry, for example, or the poetry which Johnson called 'metaphysical,' has merely the baroque conceit: which, like Marvell's figure of the Antipodes, tends to fall apart like trumpery. Neither has it any function in its poem other than that of mere ornamentation; whereas the metaphysical conceit, stating impartially and at the same time solving the problem of its context, controls and unifies that context. Or Romantic poetry: in this, the sharp opposition necessary for the metaphysical conceit is rarely attained or, if attained, soon blunted. Opposites, if mentioned, are not united in a conceit, but hastily identified one with another; as in Shelley where, 'by a law divine all things mix and mingle.' Reality, losing its complexity, gives place to a dream. The Elizabethans

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start with an opposition between the intellect and the senses, fail to keep a balance between them, and come down heavily on the side of the senses. Hence they tend to exuberance or to a stolid quality ; whereas metaphysical poetry is always alert, and is rarely exuberant, but rather elegiac. Contrast, for example, the wooing in *The Duchess of Malfi* with that in the *Extasy*. But all these distinctions are in themselves subjects for papers ; and I prefer to devote what little remains of this one to the group from a discussion of which it started. I mean Dante and Lucretius, with whom (for many purposes) I class Chapman. These, I said, wrote metaphysics in poetry, rather than metaphysical poetry. The statement can do with a little clarification.

Dante, Lucretius and Chapman are disciples rather than metaphysicians themselves ; that is, they make no independent approach to reality, but only through another man's work. This work has impressed them because it seemed to provide them with certainty ; but it could do so, only because in their enthusiasm they overlooked such caution as it contained. The final metaphor, for example, which expressed at once the master's failure and the peculiar nature of his triumph—this they ignore. Or rather, they ignore it in so far as it is a metaphor: for, as needs must they take over the words in which it is couched. But the words for them have become a simple statement—astonishing perhaps, but still not to be questioned. The metaphor is dead. The statement they believe like any other in the system, if for no better reason, then *quia impossible*. To Dante, for example.

> ' Chiaro mi fu allor com' ogni dove
> In cielo è Paradiso.'

It is clear to him, or rather was so in Heaven ; and he is unconscious of a similar problem facing him in this life, on earth. At the centre of his universe, there is a conflation of substances and accidents. This is a mere conflation: neither substance nor accident puts up a fight for its continued existence as such. But perhaps what I am trying to say is best made clear by putting side by side passages from Dante and from Donne, in which they both touch upon the same difficulty. Dante, speaking of his and Beatrice's instantaneous ascent from star to star, says:

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> ' . . . del salire
> non m'accors'io, se non com' uom s'accorge
> anzi il primo pensier, del suo venire.
> E Beatrice quella che sì scorge
> di bene in meglio, sì subitamente
> che l'atto suo per tempo non si sporge.'

Donne, on the other hand, says of the flight of Elizabeth Drury's soul to heaven:

> ' And as these stars were but so many beads
> Strung on one string, speed undistinguisht leads
> Her through those Spheres, as through the beads, a string,
> Whose quick succession makes it still one thing ':

Dante presents us with the *fait accompli*: he and Beatrice are at the end of their mystic journey, and it does not trouble him how. Donne, on the other hand, tries to follow Elizabeth Drury point by point: the problem of how the journey was possible interests him at least as much as the fact that it was made. In short, there is in Donne, there is not in Dante, the metaphysical conceit.

Metaphysical poetry, springing from a concern with problems with which the universe must always present mankind, is not confined to either one age or country. Yet the conditions in which it can be produced are by their nature somewhat rare in occurrence. Metaphysical distinctions must have been made ; further, these distinctions must be so familiar that they are no longer felt merely as a challenge to the intellect. They must rouse an altogether different emotional reaction, tinged, perhaps, with a certain scepticism. It appears therefore, only at high points of civilization ; perhaps only when that civilization is halting for a moment, or is beginning to decay. I find traces of it, I think, in Virgil ; in Tasso of the *Aminta*, not of the *Gerusalemme* ; but most of all, outside England, in the Spain of the Philips. There metaphysics was to be breathed in at the nostrils. In consequence, in some of the plays of Calderón, not the language merely, but the action is a metaphysical conceit: it is at once fleshly and spiritual, and the one, it seems, because the other. In his *autos* he developed a form of allegory—if that name indeed is appropriate—which would well repay examination. For in them it is

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not, for example, a beautiful woman who dies, nor is it Beauty that ceases to manifest itself on the earth ; but Beauty itself, incredible as it seems, that dies. I mention this, because it appears to me that, in his approach to allegory, Calderón has much in common with Herbert. Herbert, Marvell and Donne, I would say, are the three English metaphysical poets.

JAMES SMITH.

FRENCH LITERARY PERIODICALS

IT has been one of the satisfying features of the French periodicals, even long before the war, that, apart from the general influence they exercise on their readers, they have largely contributed to the sustenance of good literature and the making of the new. Not only do they help the public to keep in touch with the living forces of literary expression, but, in many cases they are a successful incentive for authors themselves to modify or improve their productions. At any rate, they very often confer upon them a kind of consecration before the literary *agora,* which, afterwards, receives a larger and not infrequently enduring approbation from the general public.

Indeed, it is the first and main duty of a literary organ to make way for good literature and to make away with the bad. I should say it is its unique business, unless it be purely informative, and, even then, it can hardly dispense with giving some sort of laudatory or depreciatory opinion. Hence, when French reviews have fairly got out of their teens, their usual organization into an anthological and a critical part. In the former, there is ample room allotted for new productions, ranging from poetry to fiction (not short stories alone, but novels also, given in several instalments,

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which is a proof of the fidelity and the interest expected even from the casual reader) and essay-writing; the latter is reserved for reviews and notes upon the manifold activities of contemporary artistic life. There may even be, jammed or expanded between the two, in such magazines as have a very positive line of thought and standards of appreciation, a third part which offers comments, criticism or doctrine in close keeping with the point of view of the group responsible for the publication. So much as to say: This is what we think worthy of your attention; this is what we think of others ; this is how we have come to decide upon either.

Now, of course, a literary review has to be born, and to keep alive, the second being the most difficult job of the two, especially it may be said, in France. Long since dead reviews are still to be seen, month after month, under the yellow or brown cover of their coffin, carrying to long since dead readers the Stygian output of their drowsy activities. They have become mummified, they are institutions of the past, venerable, it may be, and still impressive by their bulk and the echoes of the great names with which they once used to resound. Prudently exclusive of all controversy, serenely blind to novelty and deaf to any kind of appeal coming from the strange land of the living, they are concerned with ashes, confined to memoirs, history books, travels, high politics, and the Comédie Française. Now and then, however, they attempt a horrified excursion into the wild field of modernity, slow to embark and quick to return. Thus it has been my great surprise and joy to read in *La Revue des Deux Mondes,* one or two years ago, practically the best French commentary on *Ulysses,* from the wary pen of M. Louis Gillet: so had *La Revue des Deux Mondes* beaten for once *La Nouvelle Revue Française.* But I must also add in all justice that a critical study on D. H. Lawrence by the same author has been judged undesirable by the nearly octogenarian editor of a centenarian review. But why ask *La Revue des Deux Mondes* to discover D. H. Lawrence or Louis Ferdinand Céline? Proudly conservative and disdainful, *she* is an old *grande dame* exchanging grave smiles with old gentlemen and finding her way into an incredible number of private or public libraries—there to dream of the glories of her past.

Two or three other big reviews, though less provocatively ancient, have also raised themselves to a very high standard of

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critical innocence, or eclectic non-committal pronouncement. *Le Correspondant,* for example, nearly as widely circulated as *La Revue des Deux Mondes,* is the great Catholic organ. If one remembers that in France the Catholic Church is (and always will be) a staunchly conservative and even 'reactionary' force, one may easily discern the trend of thought of the contributors. The pity is the review wants to show off, as it were, its vitality and the coherence of its body of opinion; so we have, by the side of quite decent and honest articles dealing with indifferently hot topics such as *Walter Scott* or *La vraie figure de J. K. Huysmans,* elaborate disquisitions on the Russian policy or contemporary poetry which are very depressing indeed. *Le Mercure de France* should, I am sorry to say, be cited among the reviews which once played an important part in French literature. Full of impetus and zest in the time of the Symbolist movement, under the leadership of Alfred Vallette, it has now become nearly unreadable and has lost all connection with poetry. But the publishing firm of the *Mercure de France* has printed and supported dozens of poets, for which we cannot be too thankful. The review itself is remarkable to-day for its exhaustive *Carnet de la Quinzaine* which contains a large number of often detailed notes (of little critical interest but valuable for their analyses) on nearly all the books published recently. For that alone it deserves to be occasionally looked at.

A special mention must be made of *La Revue de Paris,* which, though not much younger than those already cited, remains considerably more active and may still claim to do some pioneering. The articles are well made, free from party tyranny, and come from competent and learned authors. They deal with many sides of contemporary life, and those on general politics or economics are full of science and enlightenment. Neither are young writers neglected therein: Paul Morand, Jean Giraudoux, Jean Giono, Duhamel, Marcel Achard and many others are regular contributors. *La Revue de Paris* is a typical good French review, clear, comprehensive, and stabilized, unwilling to run risks, but ready to progress along with the time, and giving to its reader his seven francs worth of nourishing stuff. It is the review of the cultivated republican bourgeoisie.

Then, we have *La Revue de France,* which, under the editorship of Marcel Prévost, the once famous confessor of the Parisian

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high-heeled lady, squirming or fidgeting after or before the ' sin of adultery,' boldly tried to mimic (with a slight attempt at rejuvenation) the bulky and well-established periodicals already mentioned. M. Fernand Vandérem, who is more of a *courriérist* than a critic, used to contribute his spirited comments on the literary events. He has been replaced (and, to my thinking, very advantageously) by M. Léon Pierre-Quint, the author of a good book on Marcel Proust and of a recent study on André Gide. M. L. Pierre-Quint belongs to the young generation of critics. He does his best prudently to inform the readers of that altogether conservative review. He has been bold enough to speak at length of D. H. Lawrence, and to expatiate on Surrealism (though the editor deemed it necessary to apologise for such a breach of good breeding).

La Revue Universelle groups a team of distinguished writers once more or less connected with the clamorous royalist organ, *L'Action Française*. But it does not indulge in aggressive pamphleteering. Its scope usually runs from history to belles-lettres, with an occasional dash of criticism. Its dramatic chronicle is consistent and valuable. Jacques Copeau, the former manager of the famous Vieux Colombier and founder of the pre-war *Nouvelle Revue Française* sometimes furnishes lively articles. But as a rule, the review is austere and academic, which does not mean always boring.

And there is an end of the main ' big ones.' It is to be noted that all those reviews are fortnightly and have no less than one hundred pages. The number of their subscribers ranges from one hundred thousand (*La Revue des Deux Mondes*—à tout seigneur, tout honneur); to probably much less. That alone shows the widespread interest of a comparatively large public in purely ' intellectual ' matters. The average Frenchman, who has gone through secondary education, often makes a point of being a subscriber to one of those reviews, and draws most of his information and ideas from them. He is faithful to the one chosen, which sometimes becomes a fixture from generation to generation, even if it remains uncut in the reception room.

But all these reviews of fixed and recognized values do not by far satisfy the whole body of the French cultured public. They stand as so many towers on the banks, passed by the active flow of life,

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which others try to follow and to lead still farther. Those we are now briefly to mark with special distinction have really shaped the new face of French letters for the last twenty-five years. They have not always professed a very coherent doctrine, and it would be difficult to infer from their contents (except for a few more decidedly positive of them, but, probably owing to that, spasmodic and short-lived) what line of thought or artistic conception they have more emphatically stressed. The truth is, whatever that may mean, they have been thoroughly *modern*. They have welcomed new forms of expression, thrown to the dogs old tenets and sterile credos, and, what is still more significant, *awakened a new kind of awareness both in the writers and the public*. They have not so much been *against* something than *for* something. They are the faithful mirrors in which the future historian of letters will have perforce to go to find the reflection of the complex and sometimes very confusing achievements of a rich and troubled period. They are *it* indeed, in the pangs of creation in its uncertain and rambling search for self-expression.

Foremost amongst them, no doubt, must be ranked *La Nouvelle Revue Française*. It was born in 1909, out of the desire of a few men to find a channel of expression for ideas and works which were to develop subterraneously during the war and to know the splendid blooming of to-day—though it is fair to own that the *N.R.F.*, sensitive as it remains, is too much of a success now not to make concessions. Copeau, Schlumberger, Gide, Jules Romains, Valéry Larbaud, Alain Fourneir gave the first impetus. There was still a smack in it of decaying symbolism but it was tempered by the newly discovered paramount importance of form as Stéphane Mallarmé conceived it, and dimly influenced by the moral concerns of A. Gide and the mysticism of Henri Ghéon. The tone was rather austere and even moralizing. It was the time when Péguy's *Cahiers de la Quinzaine* (which were a curious mixture of verbose mysticism, sentimental socialism and many other things) and *La Revue Blanche*, together with *La Revue Critique des Idées et des Livres* were already fading out of importance. The field was open for *new* tendencies. In fact, the distinguished cosmopolitanism of the years 20-25 made its appearance in the *N.R.F.* with the *Barnabooth* of Valéry Larbaud; the marvellous awakened in the novel of Alain Fournier, *Le Grand Meaulnes*, and Gide's *Les Caves*

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du Vatican set the problem of human destiny in quite unexpected terms. Then Albert Thibaudet left the Mallarmean *Phalange* to join the new team, and he has never failed since then to contribute his monthly commentaries, illuminating, subtle and comprehensive, which are the wakeful mind of the review. After the war, Copeau devoting himself entirely to his theatre, the editorship was handed over to Jacques Rivière, a young friend of Alain Fournier. He has rendered immense services to the review, with his strange and nearly unerring gift for discovering which people had something to say and were really going to matter. His attractive personality, his discriminating mind, his constant care to encourage whoever he felt to be sincerely trying to open new ways, made of him the most desirable of editors at a time of faltering attempts and perilous parturition of the future. He openly recognised the significance of the dadaist and admitted the desperate confession of Antonin Artaud, thus showing that he wanted the *N.R.F.* to test with its feelers every possible manifestation of contemporary ideals. So was the prestige of the review established among the young, and it has outlasted the disaffection of the most advanced party. Aragon, Breton, and some others among the surrealists, have seen themselves printed alongside of Paul Valéry and Marcel Proust. That prestige has slowly been extended to a much larger public because of the writers of outstanding value who have first been published by the pioneering review. Proust, of course, just mentioned, and Valéry. A novelist, whose influence was to be incalcuable, and a poet whose renown was to become European. A poet who is also a thinker, whose worship for style goes even farther than Mallarmé's, because it is not only an esthetic theory (nor pure metaphysics) but a rational attitude of the mind confronted with the possibilities of human expression, each conquest of the form being in a way a victory over death. After the death of J. Rivière, Jean Paulhan continued his policy of sympathetic attention towards free-lances, without neglecting the basic interests of a henceforward famous review. Innumerable are the names of poets, novelists, thinkers who have appeared in the columns of the *N.R.F.* Enumeration of names would be tiresome and useless. The *Nouvelle Revue Française* is now stabilized and firmly set. Its power of attraction is great and it may still be a discoverer of horizons. But it lingers slightly in the rear of one

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or two reviews which have not yet reached its high standard of perfection and coherence, though they may be in closer connection with the future.

What the *N.R.F.* lacked, and what it has lately made worthy attempts to establish, was some sort of interest, other than vague and literary, in the confusing social and political turmoil of the times. It has, indeed, given ear to writers so-called ' *de gauche* ' ; It has been russophile and anti-bourgeois enough, but not consistently, not with a body of doctrine to back it. Alain and Thibaudet are radicals at best, which is not the *ultima ratio* of modern politics, and more advanced writers are felt to be only guests, whereas, more and more the artist cannot escape taking sides. Thus, there was room for a review which, though preserving a high literary standard, would more decisively focus its preoccupations upon the torturing problems of modern society. *Europe* has filled the gap and has been, now for ten years, the organ of political non-conformism. The passionate appeals of Romain Rolland have often given the tone, but it also contains the sentimental humanitarianism of J. Guéhénno, the editor, and the wise and pungent commentaries of Jean Richard Bloch. M.M. Aron and Dandieu have published there their reasoned appeal to revolution based on a stern analysis of the evils of an industrial and capitalistic world; Trotsky, fragments of his history of the Russian revolution; P. Nizan, his philosophical outlook verging on Marxism. There is always some sort of protest running on against the brutalities of modern states, inflicting their justice upon Sacco and Vanzetti, their ' civilization ' upon India or Indo-China or Morocco, and, more generally, keeping up a fair amount of atrocities to preserve the advantages of a profitable state of things. *Europe* is the review of the dissatisfied intellectual. Politically, it belongs to no party; economically, it stresses the failures of the capitalistic system. The *tempo* is often aggressive, but the analyses are sharp and sound; the moral atmosphere very high, the contributors altogether sincere and reliable.

I suppose I ought to mention *Les Cahiers du Sud* now, as an independent provincial review, which, in spite of a rather zig-zag evolution, has fought its way, year in year out, through the depressing atmosphere of a city rather unprepared and unwilling to support a renovation of culture. *Les Cahiers du Sud* are *not* a regional-

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istic periodical, and they have had to labour under the contempt of the Parisians. But they have seen it through. They are, and will remain a fruitful field of experience for the young. Let them come from any part of the horizon whatever, provided they be sincere and have something worth saying. This is known all over France now, and even abroad, so that the scope of the review is steadily widening. Poets and essayists are specially favoured and it will be difficult for the future student of contemporary letters to overlook the series of *Les Cahiers du Sud*. The review has recently published a special number on Elizabethan drama which bears witness to its awareness and vitality.

I am unfortunately struggling against limitations of space. In no wise can this rapid muster be considered as exhaustive. There is a great number of other reviews embodying quite distinctive tendencies. The surrealists have the occasional *Le Surréalisme au service de la Révolution*. *Esprit*, in the name of the spiritual, advocates a positive action against the crimes of the *pensée bourgeoise*. *Vigiles* drifts towards a new mysticism, etc., etc. Even diminutive and humble leaflets like *Marsyas* have their significance when they offer the lively and keen criticism of a man like Denis Saurat.

To conclude, it is fair to mention *Les Nouvelles Littéraires*, which is a weekly organ of information, but has really no claim to be critical. Nevertheless, it is useful and preserves a praiseworthy journalistic dignity. I wish the same could be said of other weeklies, like *Candide* or *Gringoire* (both emanations of the right) which (though they may boast of illustrious contributors who, by thus addicting themselves to journalism of an apparently innocuous sort, keep the pot boiling) have lost all contact with literature. *Marianne*, the republican last-born, is, for the time being, by far the best, yet it is rather depressing to read what Ramon Fernandez, a distinguished critic of the *Nouvelle Revue Française* can do when he sits to scribble away his compulsory weekly paper on the novel ' just out.' The journalist has no time to digest the food vomited by the printing-press run mad. Lucky is the man who can retain a certain amount of lucidity. As to the public, all they can do it to commit the basest stuff to the waste paper basket.

HENRI FLUCHERE.

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PROSPECTUS FOR A WEEKLY

PROF. ELTON had the right end of the telescope to his eye when he wrote: 'The history of the periodical press, quarterly, weekly, daily and monthly in its bearing on the history of English culture should be written.' It is an exciting study and (especially the last hundred and thirty years) an indispensable cyclorama to silhouette our present plight: there are rich strata of evidence and pertinent anecdotage, of which I hope to give some specimens in a later note.

For the moment, it may be said that the facts prove the assertion that 'Once upon a time . . . there was a rule, a discipline, which controlled the great republic of readers in a way which is now unknown.' (*The Common Reader*, 1st Series). Mrs. Woolf, in noting the present nullity of literary criticism, and the writers who rake up the blunders of great critics in defence of their own impotence, remarks 'This is not to say that the great critic . . . was an impeccable judge of contemporary work . . . but the mere fact of their existence had a centralising influence.' The clearing houses for the exchange of opinions in the first quarter of the 19th century were supplied by the great Reviews: they acted as head and arteries to the body of the reading public at all its levels, for there was then no stratification: enlightenment spread downward to almost all who could read, and radiated over the country, for the provinces took their guidance from the centre. De Quincey observed that 'Almost all the world had surrendered their opinions and their literary consciences into the keeping of the *Edinburgh Review*.' Up to about 1890, this country had a pervasively responsible press, which preserved standards with an authority now inconceivable.

In another aspect, this press provided an honest living for many intelligent journalists and acted as a nursery for young talent. Some made journalism their profession, for others it bridged the gap between one book and another, or one profession and

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another. Journalism could offer a milieu, congenial material and a justification for existence—it is not surprising that they could turn out enormous quantities of work at a high level, for as George Eliot noted, the ' lively currents of thought and discussion explain the speed and apparent ease with which writers dashed off articles and reviews—they came from a fund acquired by social intercourse.' And were addressed, it may be added, to a homogeneous and alert audience. Unknown writers even of quite mediocre ability secured recognition on their merits. D. H. Lawrence's efforts to earn money with his typewriter contrast that state with the present lack of opportunity for talent. The careers of many higher-ups in modern ' literary ' circles are also illuminating. The kind of mind which rises to the top nowadays is exemplified in the successful novelist which Mr. Somerset Maugham brilliantly portrays in the opening chapter of his *Cakes and Ale*—an excellent eye-opener to some aspects of the literary racket. It is worth digressing to quote some of it.

The narrator of the novel speaks: ' His career might well have served as a model for any young man entering upon the pursuit of literature. I could think of no one among my contemporaries who had achieved so considerable a position on so little talent. This, like the wise man's daily dose of Bemax, might have gone into a heaped-up tablespoon. He was perfectly aware of it, and it must have seemed to him sometimes little short of a miracle that he had been able with it to compose already some thirty books. I cannot but thing that he saw the white light of revelation when first he read that Thomas Carlyle in an after-dinner speech had stated that genius was an infinite capacity for taking pains . . . His academic career was respectable rather than showy . . . his chin square. He looked honest, clean and healthy.' He sends his first novel to all the leading writers of the day, with a pleasant letter ; thus flattered, they encourage him, and he is a success. ' " I used to think," he will tell you, " that one day I should write a really great novel, but I've long since ceased even to hope for that. All that I want people to say is that I do my best. I do work. I never let anything slipshod get past me. I think I can tell a good story and I can create characters that ring true. And, after all, the proof of the pudding is in eating: *The Eye of the Needle* sold thirty-five thousand in England and

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eighty thousand in America, and for the serial rights of my next book I've got the biggest terms I've ever had yet . . . " His voice was full and manly. He told a story well. He was never dull. He was fond of lecturing upon the younger writers of England and America, and he explained their merits to his audience with an enthusiasm that attested his generosity. Perhaps he told almost too much, for when you had heard his lecture you felt that you really knew all you wanted to about them and it was quite unnecessary to read their books.' Similar methods, it will be remembered, were adopted and recommended by Mr. Nixon, the critic (see *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley*), and what happens to an initially respectable talent when exposed to this climate is strikingly demonstrated by the career of Mr. Richard Aldington (admirably sketched by Hugh Gordon Porteus in the June number of the *Twentieth Century*).

Now that the Alroy Kears have replaced the Leslie Stephens of the last century, and the literary wage-earner becomes (as Babbitt would have him) ' more and more like any other decent business man,' one of the last channels for the exercise of disinterested energy and intelligence is closed. Education remains, almost alone, something more than a matter of machine-tending ; there are few openings with such positive opportunities, and so unencumbered by the fear of futility or isolation.

Murder by commercial conditions rather than death by inanition accounted for the end of enlightened periodicals in this country. The audience remains, and it is sufficiently large to support a weekly paper of similar pretensions but superior performance to those we now half-heartedly read. I haven't any statistics about the size of the intelligent reading public in the U.S. ; but any numerical superiority over our own won't explain the existence there of two weeklies better than anything we have here. There must be many in England who buy no weekly through dissatisfaction with those that are, and others who would quickly recognize a paper with more positive tendencies than politics can supply. There are one or two journals with acceptable political comment, but their responsibility ceases about a third of the way through each issue. Some observers suggest that the debility which has ended their literary criticism has spread to their political comment, and certainly one can hardly trust the guidance of the

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papers whose star reviewers could not see through Churchill's *World Crisis* or a Wellsian conception of happiness or the optimism of Delisle Burns or the educational ideals of L. P. Jacks. But what must be stressed again and again is the point that the printing of enlightened political opinions is not enough ; the obvious point—that politics need sufficient ends before they can command support. The function (in England unfulfilled) of a weekly review should be to rally, mobilize and inform an intelligent, educated, morally responsible and politically enlightened public. Even if they had a conception of function approximate to this, our present weeklies could produce in the rest of the paper not the slightest active support of the values appealed to in the political third of each number. ' There are too many people taking this ridiculous age seriously. It is time somebody showed up both it and them.' That sounds like Beachcomber of the *Daily Express*: actually it was in a recent *Spectator* that this invitation to irresponsibility appeared. Mr. J. B. Morton was writing without apparent irony.

For a parallel and worse case, read (in *The Essayist at Large* below) Mr. Lynd congratulating us all on not worrying about the world crisis—blatantly nullifying any value the political part of his paper may have had. Mr. Lynd is not exceptional. In the same journal as Mr. Lynd (September 2, 1933), the motoring correspondent writes, not only in the callous vein reminiscent of the American ' Another pop-eyed jaywalker hits death ' but also with all the complacent assumptions of the financially-secure bourgeois (compare Major Leonard Darwin, *The Need for Eugenic Reform*):

> ' Honest people will thus admit that the pedestrian is very largely to blame for the holocaust which annually overwhelms him. This is unquestionable. Nine hundred and ninety-nine people out of a thousand wish to own cars. The purchase of a car is a matter of money. Money is made in proportion to the keenness of our wits. The keen-witted sections of the community own cars. The slower-witted sections do not own cars. Therefore the keen wits hold the steering wheels, and the slower wits travel afoot.'

The attitude, assumptions and values of that make political enlightenment look silly. It's not surprising after that to find that the various critiques of advertising which have appeared break down

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in considering the kind of publicity which most insidiously threatens non-material standards of living, like the simple writer in the *Criterion* who wrote that ' the public does not respond to poor [*i.e.* pernicious] advertisements ' in the expectation of being taken seriously. Some readers may remember an editorial paragraph in a weekly (I forget the details) which flirted with the idea of advertising as a University subject—a transatlantic perversion which even English Universities would jib at.

It would be idle to make more than suggestions for a new weekly. If, to give an idea of what an intelligent journal is like, we recommend the *New Republic*, it is not because we have any illusions about it. It is occasionally ' hardboiled ' and at the other (complementary) extreme, sentimental; in reviewing its more pretentious evaluations are rarely subtle, and one sympathizes with their correspondent who was ' given a distinct pain ' by the *New Republic's* habit of ' hauling poor old Marx into every occasional review, every piece of literary criticism.' At the moment the stress should be laid on the credit side: one can always tell from its columns whether a book is considerable or not, an intelligent book usually meets with an intelligent reviewer and it regularly diagnoses English ' literary ' successes with an acuteness not to be found in print in these islands and most cheering to anyone depressed by current reviewing here. A new weekly could clear a vast tract of jungle by placings of this kind. For middles also it might take hints from the *New Republic*, where has appeared much good reporting of significant tendencies of society. There is a virgin and boundless field for the anthropologist's notebook in this country, and sufficient competent observers. Readers' co-operation might be useful here, in supplying such things as reports on the state of provincial universities, of adult education, the use of leisure, how the unemployed spend their time—are they ' slackers ' if they resort to the public reading-rooms?—and so on. There would be articles of the kind represented by Mr. Leonard Woolf's criticism of the B.B.C. which appeared, in solitary excellence, in the *New Statesman*, and various series, *e.g.*, Distinguished Careers of significant literary, Big Business and political figures, would undoubtedly be profitable. Other small pieces of research might usefully appear—for instance, selections of cuttings to show how often a certain notorious novelist had sold the same remarks about

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the return of a broad sanity and generous full-handed creation to the English novel, and investigations of various kinds of group solidarity—*e.g.*, of the academic and journalistic worlds. Other features that could be tried are a *sottisier* of the kind indicated by Mr. Pound in *How to Read*, and a column of press-excerpts on similar lines (but more perspicacious) to Mencken's *Americana*. One or two suitable quotations have been given in this note ; other places to look would be advertisements of the type, for example, which begins ' Astonishing how a man's personality expands when he begins to take an interest in being really well-dressed, as distinct from merely buying a few suits.'

It will be said that an organ which ventured to be uncompromising and intelligent in opinions on literature and politics would be throttled, or starved for lack of advertising revenue. Though, now that reviews are commonly more extravagant and idiotic than publishers' blurbs ever were, a responsible journal whose views would influence a book-buying public might attract advertising revenue as well as readers. A good paper could command more active support than any periodical now has, and even if it didn't last long in a country which spends less per head on books than New Zealand, it would not necessarily have been a failure.

DENYS THOMPSON.

NOTE.—An article by Q. D. Leavis, *Fleet Street and Pierian Roses*, intended to accompany the above has had, for want of space, to be held over till the next number.

There will also appear an article by Denys Thompson, producing evidence from the nineteenth century.

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THE CRITICISM OF WILLIAM EMPSON

TO estimate the importance of Mr. Empson's criticism is difficult for several reasons: because *Seven Types of Ambiguity* provides a demonstration of method and a test of critical intelligence which it is not simple to view with detachment; and because there is an uneasy suspicion lest the dissecting knife should have been supplied or at least sharpened, by the reading of Mr. Empson's own work. It is not comfortable to be a self-conscious Scythian.

Mr. Empson's criticism may be conveniently if arbitrarily considered with regard first to its results and then to its technique. The obvious brilliance of *Seven Types of Ambiguity* lies in the closeness of the work, the 'niggling' for which Mr. Empson apologised. Any pure literary criticism, unadulterated with the anecdotal, the historic or the pseudo-philosophic dilutions which temper the Pierean spring to the consistency of the river Fleet will appear 'difficult' and 'pedantic.' Mr. Empson's demands for specialized knowledge and interest are no more than every literary critic has the right to assume in his readers. The result is that *Seven Types of Ambiguity* provides three hundred pages of literary criticism and hardly a page of anything else: an achievement to justify some applause in these pursy times. Where it is simply a question of intellectual closeness and keenness Mr. Empson can hardly ever be caught out.

Secondly, his work has, as has been said, unusual fertilizing power. His methods can be adapted to deal with quite different problems from those he has chosen to tackle, and can be 'crossed' with those of other literary critics: in short the book's educating function is invaluable, and is perhaps an even rarer quality.

These are methods rather than results, and in fact if one were to adopt Mr. Empson's division between analytic and appreciative criticism,[1] 'showing the modes of action of poetic effect' and 'producing a literary effect similar to the one you wish to isolate from the passage, both to show which particular one you mean and

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to convince the reader you know what you are talking about ' it would be noticed how much more adequate and fully stressed is the former function. To a question of analysis and elucidation Mr. Empson will be all alive, but there is little attempt in his book to evaluate the experience analysed and presented.

Sympathy is apparently enough. ' In so far as poetry can be regarded altogether dispassionately, so far as it is an external object for examination it is dead poetry and not worth examining . . . Unless you enjoy the poetry you cannot create it as poetry in your mind.'[2]

That is true, but there is obviously a third factor. It is not enough to analyse dispassionately and enjoy sympathetically, there must be a simultaneous act of judgment. ' No poet, no artist of any art has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists '[3] and also the relationship of the experience of the poetry to all the past experience, the total personality of the reader. This testing is the binding force between the cognitive-affective aspects: indeed, if Mr. Empson is using appreciative in the exact and not the popular meaning it is included in that term: yet his definition gives not a hint of any but the affective element, and in point of fact there are very few judgments of comparative values in *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, and scarcely one where response and judgment are fused.

Without this erective factor, the work of the critic will split into the exercise of intellectual ingenuity and the gusto of emotional stimulation. Though Mr. Empson declares that both elements are necessary, his very suggestion that they can be given separately (first the analysis, then the feeling) is a little suspect. It indicates why his best work is more apt to produce a feeling of assent, ' That's good ; I agree to that ' rather than a feeling of identification ' That's right ; that is it ' such as the best work of Mr. Eliot produces.

Because Mr. Empson is pre-occupied with analysis, the scope of his work is considerably curtailed. *Seven Types of Ambiguity* is not a survey of the whole of English poetry but of the rise and

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[1,2]See his review in *The Criterion* July 1930. [3]T. S. Eliot, *The Sacred Wood*, p. 49.

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decline of Wit. It has high lights ; the treatment of Donne, Shakespeare, the Metaphysicals, Pope: but the width of reference is really illusory: there is no mention of Blake or Hardy, hardly any of the later eighteenth century, Wordsworth or Coleridge. Yet ' O rose, thou art sick ' and ' Strange fits of passion have I known,' if not ambiguous in the grammatical sense, are in a category which might be covered by an ambiguity less rigidly logical and more complex.

Mr. Empson might reply that he had no intention of considering the whole of English literature ; but those curious little trimmings of Egyptian semantics and Chaucerian red herrings indicate that he did not deliberately limit the field, nor was he exactly conscious of the architectonics of his work. The seven types are admittedly a convenience only: the citing of unnecessary obscurities (such as the Crashaw epigrams) as if they were significant, and the unnecessary pedantries (for example there is an exasperating oblique reference to *Summers Last Will and Testament* on page 146) even suggest some anxiety to undercut the specialists and awe the undergraduate.

His intellectual ingenuity can be seen working in dissociation from his sensibility in those passage where he forces an ambiguity regardless of the odds. For example, his interpretation of ' the untented woundings of a father's curse ' (p. 113) is unbalanced by the fact that *untented* was a common word medically and almost unheard of as *roofless* so that instead of a pair of alternatives he is presenting a very close shot and a very long one. Moreover the first meaning is supported by *pierce* and *sense* in the following line, and must constitute at least 90% of the total meaning. The quadruple use of the genitive could similarly be reduced to a double one: but Mr. Empson is too excited by numerical possibilities to weigh probabilities ; ' any pains Lear has felt or is still to feel, as an effect or cause whether of his *curse* on Goneril, or of his previous *curse* on Cordelia, or of Goneril's implied *curses* on him, all these give him good reason for *cursing* Goneril with the same pains in return: and if any pains in Goneril have been cause or effect of these *cursings*, SPLENDID, let them *pierce* her.'[1] There is certainly

[1] *Seven Types of Ambiguity, loc. cit.* The capitals are mine, the italics Mr. Empson's.

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no sense of relative probabilities in this parody of Mr. Empson's better manner. That yell of triumph does not belong to King Lear ; and though Mr. Empson is undoubtedly enjoying the poetry, it is rather to be questioned whether he is creating it as poetry in his mind.

Mr. Empson drives a very frisky pen. Sometimes his facetiousness is embarrassing (*e.g.* pp. 110 and 183). It can be felt most strongly in his analysis of the passage from *Tintern Abbey*:

> For I have learned
> To look on Nature, not as in the hour
> Of thoughtless youth . . . etc.

(pp. 192-4). The sense of when to sneer is difficult to cultivate ; but to sneer at Wordsworth at least should be classed with the literary Hitlerisms. If Mr. Empson had not been enjoying the baiting, he might have thought a full stop and *and* sufficient to separate the *still, sad music of humanity* from the *presence*, the *something far more deeply interfused*, putting them inevitably into apposition to each other and in antithesis to the *still, sad music*: and whether there is not a distinction of validity between *impels* (external propulsion) and *rolls* (self-generated advance) corresponding to that between *motion* and *spirit*, so that *all things* through which the spirit *rolls* are the same as *all thinking things, all objects of all thoughts* which are *impelled* and not another class of objects ; for the theme of the passage is the transcendence of the object-subject relationship, which Mr. Empson should have as little considered Pantheistic as he should have been surprised that the higher kind of religious experience should be ' undenominational.'

At the end of his analysis Mr. Empson adds ' I must protest that I enjoy these lines very much.' But since he has completely condemned them intellectually, one must assume that by a detached act of sympathy or gusto he blots out all his objections. The quality of Mr. Empson's gusto may be sampled from his comment on Sidney's sestines (p. 48)—' This form has no direction or momentum: it beats, however rich its orchestration, with a wailing and immovable monotony for ever upon the same doors in vain '—and his interpretation of Shakespeare's description of the Last Judgment:

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> . . . we ourselves compelled
> Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults
> To give in evidence.

—' You put your hand down the hole, feel at the rat's head and face (*forehead*) and then (*teeth*) it bites back at you ' (p. 115). Here there is partly a lack of the necessary information ; if Mr. Empson had read the first canzone of Dante and all the other poems from which Sidney derived his thinly beaten out form, or if he had realized that *forehead* commonly meant *impertinence* in the sixteenth century (*cheek* in the slang of to-day) he would not have needed to induce an interpretation through a little limelight. But apart from that, the colour of the limelight may be felt to be unnecessarily garish, just as the information about Nashe was felt to be unnecessarily obtrusive.

In short, Mr. Empson's intellectual analysis and his emotional stimulation are each apt to get dissociated and out of focus. This can be seen very plainly in his article on Marvell which appeared in a recent number of *Scrutiny*. To state one's objections would be a lengthy business, but it may be suggested that *The Garden* is more than the sum of its parts, that simple addition and analysis will not work, that Mr. Empson has overstressed the sexual themes and neglected the others (*e.g.* the equally important one of the double metamorphosis of time and the individual, which he only touched) and above all that he has mistaken Marvell's tone for something a little too jaunty and smug, too like the early Donne. Mr. Empson's acute intelligence and natural exuberance can be seen operating here, but not that third factor which has been desiderated, and which his criticism seems to lack: judgment, a sense of relative values without which criticism is no more than a game for the intelligent and an emotional showerbath. Mr. Empson's criticism is of the very first importance in ' showing how a properly qualified mind works when it reads poetry, showing how those properly qualified minds have worked which have not at all understood their own working,'[1] but something more than the working of a properly qualified mind and the expression of a lively sensibility goes to the making of a great critic.

M. C. BRADBROOK.

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[1] *The Criterion, loc. cit.*

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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ECONOMICS THUS CONCEIVED

AN Economist is in Trouble about my Soul. And I must do something to allay his fears for me. I believe that once we get beyond misunderstandings of a purely verbal nature we shall find that our points of disagreement are few, though fundamental. A reply point by point to a reply to a criticism of a methodological study would, however, be interesting only as a demonstration of the over-worked Law of Diminishing Returns. So this article shall be as *straight* as possible. But first let me make it clear that I accept no responsibility for the views of Mr. Deutero-Kitchin, and that this article, such as it is, is at least my own unaided effort.

One paragraph of my article, the very first, requires explanation: for it evidently seems to Mr. Batson sheer nonsense. Professor Robbins defines Economics as the study of the relations between scarce means and ends which are taken as given data. In my somewhat obscure comment (that the economist should be interested primarily not in relations but in social institutions) two criticisms are implied. One is that Robbinsian Theory sees no fixed star in the economic universe, everything is *relative*: it provides in its so-called theory of value no more than a theory of price—no norm or standard of judgment, such as is provided, for example, by the Labour theory of value. But, of course, this point would not bear generalization: generalized it would make nonsense of social science in any of its branches—the study of social institutions is itself a study of relations. The other point (which got mixed up with the first) is of a different order. It has always seemed to me that those studies in the economic field which have proved of the greatest interest and importance have never been hide-bound by any particular formula, arbitrarily defining an ' economic aspect,' to which the scope of the study has to be restricted. The

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American economist, Thorstein Veblen, whose work is little appreciated in this country, devoted himself entirely to the study of ' economic ' institutions in all their aspects: business enterprise, absentee ownership, the leisure-class. ' Where, as in the economic field,' he writes, ' the subject of inquiry is the conduct of man in his dealings with the material means of life, the science is necessarily an enquiry into the life-history of material civilization . . . Like all human culture this material civilization is a scheme of institutions.' In our own country, no firm turns out more useful products than ' the firm of Webb.' The monumental labours of the Webbs are balanced studies of social and economic institutions in their every-day working. Their study of trade unionism, *Industrial Democracy*, consists of three parts: Structure, Functions and Theory. But the theory is not *a priori* ; it consists of generalisations which emerge from the realistic studies of the preceding sections, together with a discussion of the democratic principles of the Movement.

Mr. Batson has himself written a little book (published at the modest price of 6d.)—*Practical Economics*—which is a good example of economic science in its narrow form. ' The task of economics is to answer questions beginning with *Would* but not with *Should*,' in any broad ethical sense. Now there is clearly an important place in the social studies for an economic science so constructed as to give valid answers to the question—' What would happen as the effect of such and such a cause?' Such a science would be of great significance and a useful tool in the service of social philosophy. On its own showing, it is by this test that Robbinsian Economics must be judged. Is Robbinsian Economics adequate to the task of answering the question—' What would happen if . . .? ' If not, are there more adequate theories framed as answers to this same question?

Robbinsian Economics is primarily equipped to answer the question: What are the determinants of price in a perfectly competitive market? The importance of Mrs. Robinson's contribution is that she has recognized the inappropriateness of this question in the contemporary situation, and has re-framed the theory of price in terms of *Monopoly*, free competition figuring simply as a special case. It is an admirable book. But in spite of the formidable aspect which the book presents, it is, in the Cambridge scheme

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of things, ideally a ' first-year book.' The whole analysis is conducted by means of *curves* of Demand and Supply. But the range of applicability of this analysis is circumscribed by the list of assumptions it is forced to employ in order to obviate numerous difficulties. Demand is, in the real world, never altogether *independent* of Supply. Furthermore, as every economist knows, it is *impossible* to draw a Supply curve for the long period which is anything more than a convenient fiction: one can depict the effect on costs of an increase of output, but the changes in organization and capital equipment involved in that increase means that it can never be possible to retrace one's steps along the *same* curve. It is for reasons of this kind that economic science in its most advanced form is forced to abandon the device of curves altogether. Curves conceal more than they reveal: they require as their corollary ultra—' rigid simplifying assumptions.' Mrs. Robinson's cost curves therefore make use of this frankly ' unreal conception: they show the effect upon costs of an alteration in output, *all other conditions remaining unchanged* ' ; *i.e. appropriate* changes in technique are assumed *not* to take place.

The Shovian system, on the other hand, eschews the use of curves, but, in its cumbrous way, is exquisitely sensitive to the conditions of the real world. The choice between Mrs. Robinson and Mr. Shove is a choice between a long list of simplifying assumptions and a formula so elaborate that, even after three years of intensive study at Cambridge, there are few students who would claim to have mastered its technique.

On another page of the last number of *Scrutiny,* Denys Thompson wrote: ' There can be no such science as pure economics . . . We must desiderate in economists a pervasive understanding of what a culture is, an implicit apprehension of the kind of life to be aimed at in the working of their systems . . . One would place more confidence in economists if one felt that they had read and set their bearings by *Middletown.*'

' But you are missing the point,' the economic scientist would reply: ' if *Middletown* is sociology, then we economists are interested in it. Such studies as these constitute the raw material of our science. From our point of view, however, realist studies lie at the circumference. Our task, at the centre, is to produce a body of generalizations which lay bare the fundamental forces at work in

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the real world, and to that end we have continually to test our theories by the facts.' There is such a science as pure economics, and a place must be found for it in the scheme of the social studies. But there is a greater thing than science—Art. And it is to the art Political Economy, and to the qualities required of a political economist, that Mr. Thompson's remarks apply. It is an Art which may come to direct the lines upon which the Science shapes, for it is of over-mastering significance.

Mr. Batson does violence to my views when he implies, in his title, that I attribute *Insignificance* to *Economics*. In the last sentence of my article I express the view that ' the time has come for the construction of a Political Economy worthy of the name '—' a body of doctrine capable of providing a direct guide for public policy.' It is good to know that ' it is highly improbable that anyone would deny this.' For it seemed to me that *Professor Robbins* implicitly denied this: that he damned ' Political Economy ' with faint praise, so faint indeed that there is no mention of it in his book—an odd omission . . . He treats *Economics* as synonymous with economic *science,* and with science narrowly defined. But even so, it is strange to find that Political Economy has no defined place in his scheme of things, neither has his ' Economics ' any defined relation to ' Political Economy.' The explanation is, of course, that Political Economy no longer exists as a live body of thought, save in a form inacceptable to a man with the preconceptions of Professor Robbins. The point continually emphasised by Professor Robbins with regard to his own theory is ' the inability of Economics thus conceived to provide within itself a series of principles binding upon practice.' There is no need more urgent than that of an Economics differently conceived.

Politics has always been, since the days of Aristotle, a *combination* of political philosophy with political science. And the two branches of the subject are intimately related. In a scheme of things for which I cannot claim the support of Professor Robbins' authority, Economics is conceived as a parallel with politics. Economics, in the same way, is the study of the whole field of economic affairs, and does not confine itself to the field of economic science alone. Political Economy is the key-stone of the arch—in spite of the fact that some modern builders of Economics reject it. It is, in its essence, ethical.

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Ethical and economic considerations need to be *distinguished,* but not *divorced.* Ethical considerations are *germane* to Political Economy. They are no less relevant to economic science. For Political Economy is of such over-mastering significance that it is bound to lay down the lines along which economic science is to develop. It is for Political Economy to ask the questions which economic science can serve it by answering. What is more important than attention to roots? *The framing of the problems* most important for study is a function which science itself cannot undertake: it cannot sift wheat from straw. For this requires some criterion of significance ; and judgments of value lie outside the field of science—in that of ethics. It is interesting therefore, to find that Professor Robbins himself admits that ' in the last analysis, Economics does depend, if not for its existence, at least for its significance, on an ultimate valuation—the affirmation that rationality and ability to choose with knowledge is desirable.' Economic science, even in its narrowest form, has to found itself upon the rock of an *affirmation* as to what is *desirable.* The economist does indeed require ' the ability to choose with knowledge '—with knowledge of the problems in the real world which press most urgently for solution and which the economist alone can fit himself to solve.

Division of Labour in the social sciences is important. But Co-ordination is essential. Sociology, the wider subject of which Economics is theoretically a part, hardly, as yet, exists at all. And there is no agreement as to the nature of Political Economy. In the task of creating order out of the chaos which reigns in this field, nothing is more urgent than the securing of a *just balance* in the development of these studies, for each is essential to the others.

All this may seem dogmatic, but it does something to express a view which would, I believe, find some measure of agreement among economists. It is far more than a mere definition: it is the only way to bring order into the scheme of economic study as ordinarily conceived. But this whole scheme of things depends on an assumption which Marxism challenges—that thought divorced from action has significance. Acceptance of the Marxist position would imply the throwing over of the very categories of thought on which this scheme is based: it would make nonsense of the whole idea

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of a pure science of the Robbinsian type, and of an ethics with an existence independent of economics.

Modern Economics is in danger of becoming a mere theory of *prices*. But whether appeal is made to the practice of the Classical Economists or to plain common sense the problems of fundamental significance in Economics are two:

(1) In the theory of *Production*: what (in Adam Smith's phrase) are the Causes of the Wealth of Nations? And what policy is best calculated to bring about Optimum Production and full employment? This problem altogether escapes 'Equilibrium-Economics': 'Equilibrium' may exist with half the factors of production unemployed. Since Demand itself depends upon incomes generated in the process of production, a good way of adapting Economics to 'fruit-bearing' would be to adopt G. D. H. Cole's suggestion and found the analysis on a study of the available powers of production.

(2) In the theory of *Distribution*, the problem of significance is the distribution of incomes between *persons* and social classes, rather than that of the rewards of impersonal factors of production. Equilibrium-Economics does not do a great deal to elucidate the problem of distribution, since one of the 'given data' upon which 'Equilibrium' itself depends is the way in which income was originally distributed.

To the simple-minded, Distribution represents a relation between persons; between, on the one side, a group of people who need not fear starvation if they don't work, or else who live without giving anything to Society in return, and, on the other side, a mass of people who are forced to work by the threat of deprivation. Labour, under Capitalism is a commodity bought and sold in the market. These are simple facts. Equilibrium-Economics is so framed that it is precluded from grasping their implications. Equilibrium-Economics is unequipped to distinguish qualitative differences in the 'services which various factors render.' The Labour Theory of Value is an attempt to throw into relief the difference in real cost involved in the provision of the services of 'Capital' and 'Labour'—the fact of Exploitation which is going on every minute of the day, concealed behind the symmetry of market 'Equilibrium.'

There is an *unreality* in the sphere of thought akin to senti-

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mentality in the emotional life. *Truth* is tested by action—it is worked out in action. Professor Macmurray applies this principle to the wider philosophical field. There can at least be little doubt that ' in the field of the social sciences ' as Lindley Fraser says, ' the end of knowledge is action.' Professor Robbins has shut out action from his scheme: with it he has, according to this criterion, shut out significance. In his search for ' *purity* ' in science, he has sacrificed *reality*.

This unreality is closely bound up with the complete lack of *historical* sense which Robbinsian Economics evinces, and even acknowledges in itself. While all the time it is itself a product of a certain stage of social evolution, the era of the Market. In *La Misère de la Philosophie,* Marx observes: ' Economists are strange creatures. For them feudal institutions are artificial, bourgeois institutions are natural . . . Thus there has been history in the past, but now history is finished.'

Political Economy, as Maurice Dobb urges in his *Introduction to Economics,* has always been an *Apologetic*. In the time of Adam Smith, at the birth of Capitalism, and later in the time of Ricardo, in Capitalism's heyday, it was an apologetic for Individualism. With the decay of Capitalism capitalist-minded economists seem to be conceding something in principle to the logic of the fact that Capitalism is doomed. For the tendency is to find refuge in a newly-found pure science: Politics is emptied out of what was once Political Economy—in ' principle ' at least. But when it comes to practice the ' principle ' is forgotten—to judge at any rate from the views on public policy expressed by Robbins and Hayek. Whether it be on the subject of Trade Union interference with the Wage-level, or Socialism, or Tariffs—it is as Market-Restorers that they appear.

Marxism claims to answer in modern terms the questions with which classical Political Economy once dealt. The conclusions of Marxism, it is claimed, ' merely express in general terms actual relations springing from an existing class-struggle, from an historical movement going on under our very eyes.' And its conclusions yield directly a programme of action. This same historical movement is going on under the very nose of Robbinsian Economics: and the class-struggle is such an insignificant little thing that this queer sort of Economics cannot detect it. Whether or not its

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conclusions are sound, Marxism is at least concerned with live issues of social policy, as Political Economy must always be.

I will not waste *Scrutiny's* space in the endeavour to substantiate the argument that the life has gone out of Capitalist apologetic and that Political Economy can now take on no other form than that of an apologetic for Socialism. Mr. G. D. H. Cole's *Guide through World Chaos* is a splendid example of Political Economy adapted to the contemporary situation. This is the verdict of the public also, to judge by its circulation, which runs into tens of thousands. Mr. Cole possesses the qualities required of the political economist, but these are by no means lacking in economists nearer home. Mr. Keynes, in particular, seems to possess the instinct: 'In the field of action reformers will not be successful until they pursue a clear and definite object with their intellects and feelings in tune.' Economics must, if it is to be real, give pride of place to a *Political Economy* which pursues that same object, a body of thought subservient to action—the Economics of Socialism. Who would deny the significance of an Economics thus conceived?

DONALD K. KITCHIN.

FOOT-NOTE BY MR. BATSON.

I am very grateful to the editor of *Scrutiny* and to Mr. Kitchin for their courtesy in inviting me to add a note on the chief points concerning which I am still unconvinced.

In the first place, it seems that Mr. Kitchin and I have different conceptions of the nature of sciences in general. Mr. Kitchin wants an economic science that is not devoid of ethical implications and that is binding on practice. Such a body of rules, as distinct from mere knowledge, would go considerably beyond my idea of what constitutes a true science. Certainly, a useful science—and who of us, in this present age, dare avow an interest in *useless* studies?—would have *bearings* upon action; but that is quite a different matter. It was surely this point to which Professor Robbins referred in the 'admission' quoted by Mr. Kitchin. *Any* science depends, 'if not for its existence, at least for its significance,' on some ultimate valuation; but for its *significance*, not for its *content*. The science would still be the same if the relevant valuation were adverse; only in that case

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it would be a useless, instead of a useful, science.

Secondly, Mr. Kitchin seems to identify scientific method with deduction, and I know of no justification for this, whether in Professor Robbins's *Essay* or elsewhere.

Thirdly, so far as Mr. Dobb and Mr. Kitchin are right in urging that Political Economy has always been an apologetic, I should be inclined to regard this as what certain modern historians would call a Bad Thing, while Mr. Kitchin turns it into an opportunity for both eating his cake and still having it, which is, of course, a Good Thing, at least for him.

Fourthly, I cannot agree that 'Robbinsian' economics is so bound up with the phenomena of prices as Mr. Kitchin would have us believe. In the present economic order, prices *are* pre-eminent, and a truthful economics must deal with them at proportionate length. In other conceivable economic orders, the same body of principles would treat of them more briefly. As to the perfectly competitive market, *that* has played a leading role in most economic systems until very recent years, the Marxian no less than the Subjectivist; and now it is being subordinated in most of these systems, not merely to studies of Monopoly—those came fifty years ago—but also to studies of various other contraries of perfect competition. But I cannot see that that has any particular bearing on the views of Professor Robbins—except, indeed, in so far as the allegation which Mr. Kitchin makes was repudiated eighteen months ago in a foot-note on page 92 of the *Essay*, in terms which are by implication most unflattering to Mr. Kitchin's qualifications as critic.

Fifthly, I must plead guilty to having misunderstood Mr. Kitchin's use of the term Economics, and to having based part of my criticism of his closing paragraph in the September number on that misunderstanding. But I would still maintain the general drift of that criticism.

I also disagree with Mr. Kitchin's remarks about long-period supply curves and about 'full employment' of factors of production, but to argue these purely technical points at length would hardly be pertinent to the matter in hand. And I am disappointed that Mr. Kitchin did not find an opportunity of stating his attitude toward the Marshallian dicta on Scope which I quoted in the September number.

HAROLD BATSON.

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DE LA BREVEDAD ENGAÑOSA DE LA VIDA

Menos solicitò veloz saeta
Destinada senal, que mordiò aguda,
Agonal carro por la arena muda
No coronò con mas silencio Meta:
Que presurosa corre, que secreta
A su fin nuestra edad, a quien lo duda,
Fiera que sea de razon desnuda,
Cada Sol repetido es vn cometa.
Confiessalo Cartago, y tu lo ignoras?
Peligro corres, Licio, si porfias
En seguir sombras, y abrazar engaños.
Mal te perdonaràn a ti las horas,
Las horas, que limando estàn los dias,
Los dias, que royendo estàn los años.

DON LUIS DE GONGORA—1623.

OF THE DECEIVING BREVITY OF LIFE

The swiftest arrow never courted more
The destined target that it sharply bit:
Nor festive chariot over dumb sand bore
To crown the winning-post more silently:
Than secretly, precipitately runs
Our age unto its end; who doubts of it
May a wild beast of reason naked be
But daily comets are the setting suns.
Carthage confessed what you deny; delays,
Licius, are dangerous. Have you no fears
Frauds to embrace and shadows to pursue?
Hardly the hours will pardon grant to you,
Hours that are always sketching out the days,
The days that gnaw continually the years.

EDWARD MERYON WILSON

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REVALUATIONS (II)

THE POETRY OF POPE

POPE has had bad luck. Dryden, fortunate in the timeliness of Mr. Mark Van Doren's book, was enlisted in the argument against the Nineteenth Century. It was an opportunity; the cause was admirable and *Homage to John Dryden* admirably served it (though Mr. Eliot, who—or so it seems to me—has always tended to do Dryden something more than justice, was incidentally, perhaps accidentally, unfair to Pope). The homage announcing, on the other hand, Pope's rehabilitation was left to Bloomsbury, and Pope, though he has more to offer the modern reader than Dryden and might have been enlisted in the argument with certainly not less effect, was taken over, an obvious property, by the post-war cult of the *dix-huitième*—an opportunity for Lytton Strachey and Miss Sitwell.

Such attention as he has received from critics qualified to appreciate him—an aside from Mr. Middleton Murry,[1] a note by Mr. Edgell Rickword,[2] a paragraph or two of Empsonian analysis[3] —has been casual. It is true that what is offered by these three critics (and there is not a great deal more to record) would, if considered, be enough to establish an intelligent orientation to Pope. And one can hardly pretend to attempt more than this: the heading ' Revaluation,' Pope's achievement being so varied, is over-ambitious. In a space so limited one can aim at little more than to suggest coercively the re-orientation from which a revaluation follows; if more, to indicate something of Pope's range and variety.

' Re-orientation,' here, envisages in particular the classification ' satirist.' It may be no longer necessary to discuss whether satire can be poetry, and we may have entirely disposed of Matthew Arnold; nevertheless, when Pope is classed under ' Satire ' it is still with a limiting effect, as if he did only one kind of thing, and that

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[1]See the essay on Collins in *Countries of the Mind*.
[2]In a review of the *Oxford Book of 18th Century Verse* reprinted in *Towards Standards of Criticism*.
[3]*Seven Types of Ambiguity*, pp. 161-2.

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involving definite bounds and a restricted interest. So there is point in considering to begin with a poem of an excellence that is obviously not satiric.

The rare fineness of the *Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady* has not had the recognition it deserves. It is praised commonly (when praised) for a ' pathetic power ' distinguishing it from the body of Pope's work, but this does not appear to recommend it even to Miss Sitwell. In fact, though to condemn the manner as declamatory is no longer the thing, there is something about it that is found unengagingly outmoded. I remember to have heard, incredulously, a theory, purporting to come from a critic of high repute, that is worth mentioning because it calls attention to certain essential characteristics of the poem. The theory was that Pope opened in all solemnity, but, finding it impossible to continue in so high-flown a strain without smiling at himself (he had, after all, a sense of humour), slipped in a qualifying element of burlesque and achieved a subtle total effect analogous to that of *Prufrock*. The evidence? Well, for example, this:

> As into air the purer spirits flow,
> And sep'rate from their kindred dregs below;
> So flew the soul to its congenial place,
> Nor left one virtue to redeem her Race.

The percipient reader, one gathered, smiled here, and, if it were pointed out that ' dregs ' turned ' the purer spirits ' into a ludicrous metaphor, the less percipient would smile also.

Nevertheless, the reader who sees the relevance here of remarking that Pope was born in the Seventeenth Century will not be inclined to smile any more than at

> But ah! my soul with too much stay
> Is drunk, and staggers in the way

in Vaughan's *The Retreat*. If it had never even occurred to one that the image could strike any reader as funny, it is not because of the lulling effect of Pope's orotund resonances, but because, by the time one comes to the lines in question, one has been so potently reminded of Pope's Metaphysical descent. The preceding lines are actually those quoted by Mr. Middleton Murry as illustrating the Metaphysical element in Pope:

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> Most souls, 'tis true, but peep out once an age,
> Dull sullen pris'ners in the body's cage:
> Dim lights of life, that burn a length of years
> Useless, unseen, as lamps in sepulchres;
> Like Eastern Kings a lazy state they keep,
> And close confin'd to their own palace, sleep.

Mr. Murry's observation is just. Pope is as much the last poet of the Seventeenth Century as the first of the Eighteenth. His relationship to the Metaphysical tradition is aptly suggested by his *Satires of Dr. Donne Versified*: bent as he was (with Dryden behind him) on being the first 'correct' poet, Metaphysical 'Wit'—the essential spirit of it—was at the same time congenial to him, more so than to Dryden; and what is suggested in the undertaking to 'versify' Donne he achieved in his best work. In it subtle complexity is reconciled with 'correctness,' his Wit is Metaphysical as well as Augustan, and he can be at once polite and profound.

In the passage first quoted one is not merely solemnly impressed by the striking images; their unexpectedness and variety—the 'heterogeneous ideas' that are 'yoked together'—involve (on an adequate reading) a play of mind and a flexibility of attitude that make such effects as that of 'dregs' acceptable when they come: there is an element of surprise, but not the shock that means rejection (complete or ironically qualified) of the inappropriate. Seriousness for Pope, for the Metaphysicals, for Shakespeare, was not the sustained, simple solemnity it tended to be identified with in the Nineteenth Century; it might include among its varied and disparate tones the ludicrous, and demand, as essential to the total effect, an accompanying play of the critical intelligence. So in these lines of Pope: the associations of 'peep' are not dignified, and one's feelings towards the 'souls' vary, with the changing imagery, from pitying contempt for the timorous peepers, through a shared sense (still qualified with critical contempt, for one is not oneself dull and sullen) of the prisoners' hopeless plight, and a solemn contemplation in the sepulchral couplet of life wasted among shrivelled husks, to that contempt mixed with humour and a sense of opulence which is appropriate to the Kings lazing in their palaces.

The Kings are at least dignified, and they make the transition

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to the complete dignity of the Lady, who enters again in the next couplet:

> From these perhaps (ere nature bade her die)
> Fate snatch'd her early to the pitying sky.
> As into air the purer spirits flow, etc.

But her dignity is not a precarious one, to be sedulously guarded from all possibly risible associations. The ' mean ' element in the texture of the previous passage can be safely carried on in ' dregs.' The very violence of this, directed as it is upon her contemptible family (' her Race '), draws the attention away from the value it gives, retrospectively, to ' spirits,' though enough of this value is felt to salt a little, as it were, the sympathetically tender nobility that is opposed to ' dregs.'

Indeed, the successful reconciliation of so formally exalted a manner with such daring shifts and blends is conditioned by this presence of a qualifying, seasoning element. This presence is Wit. We have a clear sense of its being generated (to take the process at its most observable) in the play of thought and image glanced at above, from ' Most souls ' to ' sleep.' The changes of tone and attitude imposed on the reader (consider, for instance, that involved in passing from ' souls ' to ' peep ' in the first line) result in an alertness; a certain velleity of critical reserve in responding; a readiness for surprise that amounts in the end to an implicit recognition, at any point, in accepting what is given, of other and complementary possibilities. It becomes plain, in the light of such an account, why we should find ourselves describing as ' mature ' the sensibility exhibited by verse in which Wit is an element, and also why, in such verse, a completely serious poetic effect should be able to contain suggestions of the ludicrous such as for Gray, Shelley or Matthew Arnold would have meant disaster.

The use here of the term ' Wit ' has its prompting, of course, in the Seventeenth Century, when Wit was an established mode, cultivated as such by the practitioner of verse. ' An established mode '—it is extremely difficult in a limited space to avoid misleading simplifications: the line running from Ben Jonson (the Jonson represented in the *Oxford Book* by Numbers 192 and 193) was as important as that running from Donne. Yet to speak of two is also misleading ; how the lines could merge is suggested

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well enough by the mention of Carew and Marvell. 'Wit' comprehended not only the audacities of Donne, but also the urbane critical poise of Ben Jonson. A like poise is an essential characteristic of Marvell's best Metaphysical work, and is developed, as it were, for inspection in the *Horatian Ode,* that perfect triumph of civilization, unique in English, beside which the Augustanism of Pope appears to have a note of provinciality (one may at any rate say that, in comparison with Pope's, which is strongly 'period,' Marvell's is timeless).

It is, then, plain enough that Pope's reconciliation of Metaphysical Wit with the Polite has antecedents.

> A Soul hung up, as 'twere, in Chains
> Of Nerves, and Arteries, and Veins.
> Tortur'd, besides each other part,
> In a vain Head, and double Heart.

—The familiar turn of that close, a turn not confined to Marvell, of whom, however, the supreme representative of Seventeenth Century urbanity, it is most characteristic, surely has affinities with a characteristic effect of Pope's longer couplet:

> First slave to Words, then vassal to a Name,
> Then dupe to Party ; child and man the same ;
> Bounded by Nature, narrow'd still by Art,
> A trifling head, and a contracted heart.

But such particularity of resemblance may hinder as much as help; it may be better to adduce something as insistently unlike anything Pope could have written as King's

> 'Tis true, with shame and grief I yield,
> Thou like the *Vann* first took'st the field
> And gotten hast the victory
> In thus adventuring to dy
> Before me, whose more years might crave
> A just precedence in the grave.

A certain crisp precision of statement, a poised urbanity of movement and tone, that relates this passage to the other two becomes very apparent in the last line. The effect is as of an implicit reference, even here in King where personal feeling is so

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indubitably strong, of the immediate feeling and emotion to a considered scale of values—a kind of critical ' placing,' as it were.

A kindred effect begins, in the latter half of the first paragraph, to make itself felt even in the rather histrionic exaltation of Pope's opening:

> Is it, in heav'n, a crime to love too well?
> To bear too tender, or too firm a heart,
> To act a Lover's, or a Roman's part?
> Is there no bright reversion in the sky,
> For those who greatly think, or bravely die?

Enough at any rate is there to make possible the marvellously sure transition to the passage quoted by Mr. Murry and examined above, which constitutes most of the second paragraph.

It is time now to consider the declamatory heightening characteristic of the poem. It compels attention to itself again at about the thirteenth line, leading as it does to those magnificent exaggeration-effects:

> On all the line a sudden vengeance waits,
> And frequent hearses shall besiege your gates.
> There passengers shall stand, and pointing say,
> (While the long fun'rals blacken all the way)
> Lo these were they . . .

The success of these effects depends, it is clear, upon the heightened tone and manner, or rather it is a matter of complementary manifestations.

No modern poet, of course, could adopt successfully so lofty and formal a decorum, though the modern reader should have no difficulty in living into it. Pope could find it natural because it was sanctioned by contemporary convention. So obvious a statement may seem not worth making, but there are implications that still, apparently, need insisting on. It is not a question of merely literary convention, any more than Pope's ' correctness ' is to be discussed, as Lytton Strachey elegantly affects to discuss it, in prosodic terms (one cannot say ' technical '—technique in any serious sense does not exist for discussion at that level), as consummating a bent towards regularity and symmetry—a bent developing out of the recognition that the ' possibilities ' of blank

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verse were ' exhausted.' The development was in English life, and the ' correctness ' of Pope's literary form derives its strength from a social code and a civilization. With Dryden begins the period of English literature when form is associated with Good Form, and when, strange as it may seem to us, Good Form could be a serious preoccupation for the intelligent because it meant, not mere conformity to a code of manners, but a cultivated sensitiveness to the finest art and thought of the time.

The Augustans could be so innocently unaware of the conventional quality of the code—it was ' Reason ' and ' Nature '—because they were in complete accord about fundamentals. Politeness was not merely superficial ; it was the surface of a culture and a civilization, and the substance and solid bases were so undeniably there that there was no need to discuss them or to ask what was meant by ' Sense.' Augustanism is something narrower, less fine and less subtle, than what Marvell stands for, but it has a corresponding strength of concentration and single-mindedness.

If Pope too, then, could be both elegant and insolent, the elegance and the insolence were not inane. How firmly he realized the substance, and how habitually present to him were the positive bases, one is apt to find most strikingly evidenced in the neighbourhood of his most spirited satiric passages. For instance, there is the culminating passage, in *Epistle IV* (to Burlington), of the attack on Canons:

> But hark; the chiming Clocks to Dinner call;
> A hundred footsteps scrape the marble Hall:
> The rich Buffet well-colour'd Serpents grace,
> And gaping Tritons spew to wash your face.
> Is this a dinner? this a Genial room?
> No, 'tis a Temple, and a Hecatomb.
> A solemn Sacrifice, perform'd in state,
> You drink by measure, and to minutes eat.
> So quick retires each flying course, you'd swear
> Sancho's dread Doctor and his Wand were there.
> Between each Act the trembling salvers ring,
> From soup to sweet-wine, and God bless the King.
> In plenty starving, tantaliz'd in state,

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And complaisantly help'd to all I hate,
Treated, caress'd, and tir'd, I take my leave,
Sick of his civil Pride from Morn to Eve ;
I curse such lavish cost, and little skill,
And swear no Day was ever passed so ill.

After the sneering, destructive gusto of this one can for a moment hardly credit that the next four lines are unironically solemn, so complete is the change of tone:

Yet hence the Poor are cloth'd, the Hungry fed;
Health to himself, and to his Infants bread
The Lab'rer bears: What his hard Heart denies,
His charitable Vanity supplies.

If there were any doubt it would be settled at once by what follows. This is a passage that occasions some of the finest criticism in Mr. Empson's *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (pp. 161-2):

Another age shall see the golden Ear
Embrown the Slope, and nod on the Parterre,
Deep Harvests bury all his pride has plann'd,
And laughing Ceres re-assume the land.

Mr. Empson's subtle commentary, which is immediately relevant and should be looked up, ends with a hope for agreement on the part of the reader that there is conveyed in these lines a feeling for nature, called forth ' by a conception of nature in terms of human politics ' ; ' that there is some sense of the immensity of harvest through a whole country; that the relief with which the cripple for a moment identifies himself with something so strong and generous gives these two couplets an extraordinary scale.'

The qualification and addition that I would make are that the cripple may be over-stressed and that there is a more general significance. The relevant commentary for my argument is offered implicitly by Pope himself in the lines that come next:

Who then shall grace, or who improve the Soil?
Who plants like Bathurst, or who builds like Boyle.
'Tis Use alone that sanctifies Expense,
And Splendour borrows all her rays from Sense.
His Father's Acres who enjoys in peace,
Or makes his Neighbours glad, if he increase:

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Whose cheerful Tenants bless their yearly toil,
Yet to their Lord owe more than to the soil;
Whose ample Lawns are not asham'd to feed
The milky heifer and deserving steed;
Whose rising Forests, not for pride or show,
But future Buildings, future Navies, grow:
Let his plantations stretch from down to down,
First shade a Country, and then raise a Town.
You too proceed! . . .

—And so it goes on, in fourteen more lines of hortatory grandeur, to the end.

Formal compliment in the Grand Style, someone may remark, was in order in such a piece, particularly in the close; it was in the convention of the period. It was. The period was one that could support such a convention, and Pope here (that is the point) has the strength of his period. That the positives so magnificently asserted are asserted more than conventionally we know from the force and life of the passage, which is essentially continuous with those superb prelusive lines appraised in Mr. Empson's analysis. The same inspiration informs the whole: the ideal (generally shared and not hopelessly removed from the actual) of a civilization in which Art and Nature, Beauty and Use, Industry and Decorum, should be reconciled, and humane culture, even in its most refined forms, be kept appropriately aware of its derivation from and dependence on the culture of the soil. The æsthetic, the moral and the utilitarian are characteristically associated in the ' milky heifer and deserving steed,' which graze the ' ample lawns ' of an Eighteenth Century landscape, itself a work of art.

From the supply-varying, continually surprising, play of satiric ridicule to these resonant and decorous elevations (where ' steed ' comes naturally) Pope can pass with perfect ease and sureness of transition—a testimony not only to the stable poise that makes the elevations safe, but, reciprocally, to something in the satire.

The commentary called for by the exalted decorum of the *Elegy* is, then, implicitly provided by Pope himself:

'Tis Use alone that sanctifies Expense,
And Splendour borrows all her rays from Sense.

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Pope was at one with a society to which these were obvious but important truths. So supported, he could sustain a formal dignity such as, pretended to, would make a modern ridiculous. 'Use' represents robust moral certitudes sufficiently endorsed by the way of the world, and 'Sense' was a light clear and unquestionable as the sun.

There is no room to illustrate further the variety of tone from passage to passage in the *Elegy*, or the sureness of the transitions. After various tones of declamation, we pass through the passage anticipating (or furnishing) an Eighteenth Century mode, associated with Collins and Gray, of conventional elegiac sentiment to the deeply moving final paragraph, in which the strong personal emotion, so firmly subdued throughout to the 'artificial' form and manner, insists more and more on its immediately personal intensity.

It is time now to turn to the satirist. What in the foregoing page or two may have appeared excessively elementary will be recognized, perhaps, in its bearing on the satire, to serve at least some purpose. For, granting Pope to be pre-eminently a satirist and to enjoy as such what favour he does enjoy, one cannot easily find good reasons for believing that an intelligent appreciation of satiric poetry is much commoner to-day than it was among the contemporaries of Matthew Arnold. Elementary things still need saying. Such terms as 'venom,' 'envy,' 'malice' and 'spite' are, among modern connoisseurs, the staple of appreciation (it is, at any rate, difficult to find anything on Pope in other terms): '. . . we are in the happy position of being able, quite imperturbably, to enjoy the fun . . . We sit at our ease, reading those *Satires* and *Epistles*, in which the verses, when they were written, resembled nothing so much as spoonfuls of boiling oil, ladled out by a fiendish monkey at an upstairs window upon such of the passers-by whom the wretch had a grudge against—and we are delighted.' The Victorians disapproved; Bloomsbury approves: that is the revolution of taste.

It is, in some ways, a pity that we know so much about Pope's life. If nothing had been known but the works, would 'envy,' 'venom,' 'malice,' 'spite' and the rest have played so large a part in the commentary? There is, indeed, evidence in the satires of strong personal feelings, but even—or, rather, especially—where

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these appear strongest, what (if we are literate) we should find most striking is an intensity of art. To say, with Leslie Stephen and Lytton Strachey, that in the character of Sporus Pope 'seems to be actually screaming with malignant fury' is to betray an essential inability to read Pope.

But one has to conclude from published criticism that the nature of Pope's art is very little understood. Just as I reach this point there comes to hand the following, by an American critic:[1] 'A familiar charge often brought against Shelley is lack of discipline, but in such charges one must always know what the poet is trying to control. If, as in the case of Pope, it is the mere perfection of a regulated line of verse, the problem becomes one of craftsmanship.' A 'mere perfection of a regulated line of verse' is not anything as clearly and precisely indicated as the critic, perhaps, supposes; but that he supposes Pope's technique ('craftsmanship' being plainly depreciatory) to be something superficial, some mere skill of arranging a verbal surface, is confirmed by what he goes on to say: Pope's 'recitation of the dogmas of his day is hollow,' and 'in his day as in ours it is a relatively simple matter to accept a ritual of devotion as a substitute for an understanding of basic moral values.'

An 'understanding of basic moral values' is not a claim one need be concerned to make for a poet, but that Pope's relation to the 'basic moral values' of the civilization he belonged to was no mere matter of formal salute and outward deference has been sufficiently shown above, in the discussion of the close of *Epistle IV*. When Pope contemplates the bases and essential conditions of Augustan culture his imagination fires to a creative glow that produces what is poetry even by Romantic standards. His contemplation is religious in its seriousness. The note is that of these lines, which come in *Epistle III* not long after a vigorous satiric passage and immediately before another:

> Ask we what makes one keep and one bestow?
> That Pow'r who bids the Ocean ebb and flow,
> Bids seed-time, harvest, equal course maintain,

[1]Horace Gregory: *A Defense of Poetry*. *The New Republic*. October 11th, 1933.

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Thro' reconcil'd extremes of drought and rain,
Builds life on Death, on Change Duration founds,
And gives th' eternal wheels to know their rounds.

The order of Augustan civilization evokes characteristically in Pope, its poet, when he is moved by the vision of it, a profound sense of it as dependent on and harmonious with an ultimate and inclusive order. The sense of order expressed in his art when he is at his best (and he is at his best more than most poets) is nothing merely conventional or superficial, explicable in terms of social elegance and a pattern of verse. His technique, concerned as it is with arranging words and 'regulating' movements, is the instrument of a fine organization, and it brings to bear pressures and potencies that can turn intense personal feelings into something else. 'His "poetic criticism of life,"' says Lytton Strachey, gibbeting solemn fatuity, 'was simply and solely the heroic couplet.' Pope would have found it hard to determine what precisely this means, but he certainly would not have found the fatuity Arnold's, and if the Augustan idiom in which he expressed much the same commonplaces as Arnold's differed from the Victorian, it was not in being less solemn.

The strong Antipathy of Good to Bad

—we may not accept this as suggesting adequately the moral basis of Pope's satire, but it is significant that Pope could offer such an account: his strength as a satirist was that he lived in an age when such an account could be offered.

The passages of solemnly exalted imagination like those adduced above come without incongruity in the midst of the satire—the significance of this needs no further insisting on. What does need insisting on is that with this capacity for poised and subtle variety goes a remarkable command of varied satiric tones. The politeness of the Atticus portrait is very different from that of the *Rape of the Lock* (a work that, in my opinion, has enjoyed more than justice); the intense destructive vivacity of the Sporus portrait is different from that of the attack on Timon; the following (which is very far from an exception) is enough to dispose of the judgment that Pope was 'witty though not humorous'—the theme is Paper Credit:

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Had Colepepper's whole wealth been hops and hogs,
Could he himself have sent it to the dogs?
His Grace will game: to White's a Bull be led,
With spurning heels and with a butting head.
To White's be carry'd, as to ancient games,
Fair Coursers, Vases, and alluring Dames.
Shall then Uxorio, if the stakes he sweep,
Bear home six Whores, and make his Lady weep?

The story of Sir Balaam at the end of *Epistle III* is, again, quite different, recalling as it does both Dryden and Crabbe—but one cannot by enumerating, even if there were room, do justice to Pope's variety. Indeed, to call attention to the satiric variety as such is to risk a misleading stress.

Even Mr. Eliot, in *Homage to John Dryden,* manages to limit Pope very unjustly. Some accidental unfair suggestion one might expect in such casual reference. But there is decidedly more than that to complain of. For instance:

' But the effect of the portraits of Dryden is to transform the object to something greater, as were transformed the verses of Cowley quoted above.

A fiery soul, which working out its way,
Fretted the pigmy body to decay:
And o'er informed the tenement of clay.

These lines are not merely a magnificent tribute. They create the object which they contemplate; the poetry is purer than anything in Pope except the last lines of the *Dunciad.'*

This is a judgment that Matthew Arnold would have understood—or thought he understood ; for one knows that Mr. Eliot is not appealing here to the prejudices that it is the general aim of his essay to destroy. Yet the judgment is perplexing. The end of the *Dunciad* was admired in the Victorian age as approaching nearer to ' pure poetry ' than Pope does characteristically; but no one could have better pointed out than Mr. Eliot its strength and subtlety of Wit. The passage seems to me finer than anything in Dryden; decidedly finer, for instance, than the comparable part of *MacFlecknoe.* It has a greater intensity (an intensity that Dryden, with his virtues of good-humour and good-nature, was incapable

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of), and this is manifest in the very much tauter and more sensitive verse, the finer life of the movement.

As for ' comic creation,' it seems to me easy to find passages of Pope that have a like advantage over the lines of Dryden quoted by Mr. Eliot:

> The country rings around with loud alarms,
> And raw in fields the rude militia swarms;
> Mouths without hands; maintained at vast expense,
> In peace a charge, in war a weak defence;
> Stout once a month, they march, a blust'ring band,
> And ever, but in times of need, at hand;
> This was the morn, when issuing on the guard,
> Drawn up in rank and file they stood prepared
> Of seeming arms to make a short essay,
> Then hasten to be drunk, the business of the day.

Repeated re-readings of both passages only convince me the more that this of Dryden's is much inferior to the following, which starts twenty lines before the final paragraph of the *Dunciad*:

> More had she spoke, but yawn'd—All Nature nods:
> What mortal can resist the Yawn of Gods?
> Churches and Chapels instantly it reach'd;
> (St. James's first, for leaden Gilbert preach'd)
> Then catch'd the Schools; the Hall scarce kept awake;
> The Convocation gap'd, but could not speak:
> Lost was the Nation's Sense, nor could be found,
> While the long solemn Unison went round:
> Wide, and more wide, it spread o'er all the realm;
> Ev'n Palinurus nodded at the Helm:
> The Vapour mild o'er each Committee crept;
> Unfinish'd Treaties in each Office slept;
> And Chiefless Armies doz'd out the Campaign;
> And Navies yawn'd for Orders on the Main.

Dryden, says Mr. Eliot, ' bears a curious antithetical resemblance to Swinburne. Swinburne was also a master of words, but Swinburne's words are all suggestion and no denotation ; if they suggest nothing, it is because they suggest too much. Dryden's words, on the other hand, are precise, they state immensely, but

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their suggestiveness is almost nothing.' These lines of Pope seem to me to have all the strength of Dryden's, and to have, in addition, a very remarkable potency of suggestion.

We feel the enveloping, thickening, drowsy vapour spread irresistibly and take on, even, something of a rich romantic glamour—a quality concentrated in

> Ev'n Palinurus nodded at the Helm.

This is certainly poetic creation, even by Romantic standards, and yet it is, at the same time, 'comic creation.' The suggestive richness is blended with something quite un-Romantic:

> Lost was the Nation's Sense, nor could be found,
> While the long solemn Unison went round.

The effect of the first of these lines is, to Nineteenth Century taste, intrinsically unpoetical, but in the second line the ' long solemn unison ' is, though ludicrous, at the same time truly solemn. The ' Chiefless Armies ' doze in an immensely fantastic dream-comedy, and the Navies yawn vastly on an enchanted sea.

Beside the passage of *MacFlecknoe* in which Dryden uses Cowley may be set, not to Pope's disadvantage, this from the fourth book of the *Dunciad*:

> When Dulness, smiling—' Thus revive the Wits!
> But murder first, and mince them all to bits;
> As erst Medea (cruel so to save!)
> A new Edition of old Aeson gave;
> Let standard-authors, thus, like trophies born,
> Appear more glorious as more hack'd and torn.
> And you, my Critics! in the chequer'd shade,
> Admire new light thro' holes yourselves have made.
> Leave not a foot of verse, a foot of stone,
> A Page, a Grave, that they can call their own.'

A commentary like that which Mr. Eliot makes on Dryden's borrowings (' only a poet could have made what Dryden made of them ') is applicable to Pope's, except that there seems to be even more point in Pope's use of his, and a greater intensity of surprise in his poetry. The ragged squalour of the Critics in their dark garrets (' batter'd and decay'd ') is ironically enhanced by contrast with Milton's

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many a youth and many a maid
Dancing in the chequered shade.

But it is the use of Waller that is most felicitous:

The soul's dark cottage, battered and decay'd,
Lets in new light through chinks that Time hath made.

There is nothing merely flippant in Pope's sardonic play upon 'light'; the solemnity of Waller's theme is present in the indignant observation that it was not Time that made these holes. Indeed, the seriousness of the original is intensified, for Waller is rather easily conventional in his solemn sentiment. The weight makes itself felt in the next couplet, the last of those quoted:

Leave not a foot of verse, a foot of stone,
A Page, a Grave, that they can call their own.

The recognition of inevitable death, decay and oblivion charges the bitterness of this—of the pun in the first line and the sardonic concentration of the second.

The Metaphysical descent here is plain, but no plainer than in abundance of other passages. The following, in its satiric mode, has in the opening the deep note of those lines in the *Elegy* ('Most souls, 'tis true,' etc.), and the ironical fantasy of the whole has a poetic intensity extraordinarily rich in beauty, oddness and surprise:

The common Soul, of Heaven's more frugal make,
Serves but to keep fools pert, and knaves awake:
A drowsy Watchman, that just gives a knock,
And breaks our rest, to tell us what's a-clock.
Yet by some object ev'ry brain is stirr'd;
The dull may waken to a humming-bird;
The most recluse, discreetly open'd, find
Congenial matter in the Cockle-kind;
The mind, in Metaphysics at a loss,
May wander in a wilderness of Moss;
The head that turns at super-lunar things,
Pois'd with a tail, may steer on Wilkins' wings.

An element that in the close of the *Dunciad* blends with the sublime here associates naturally with quite other effects:

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> With that, a WIZARD OLD his *Cup* extends;
> Which whoso tastes, forgets his former friends,
> Sire, Ancestors, Himself. One casts his eyes
> Up to a *Star*, and like Endymion dies:
> A *Feather*, shooting from another's head,
> Extracts his brain; and Principle is fled;
> Lost is his God, his Country, ev'ry thing;
> And nothing left but Homage to a King!
> The vulgar herd turn off to roll with Hogs,
> To run with Horses, or to hunt with Dogs;
> But sad example! never to escape
> Their Infamy, still keep the human shape.
> But she, good Goddess, sent to ev'ry child
> Firm Impudence, or Stupefaction mild;
> And straight succeeded, leaving shame no room,
> Cibberian forehead, or Cimmerian gloom.

But illustration might go on indefinitely. A representative selection of passages would fill a great many pages. A selection of all Pope that one would wish to have by one for habitual re-reading would fill a great many more. Is it necessary to disclaim the suggestion that he is fairly represented in short extracts? No one, I imagine, willingly reads through the *Essay on Man* (Pope piquing himself on philosophical or theological profundity and acumen is intolerable, and he cannot, as Dryden can, argue interestingly in verse); but to do justice to him one must read through not merely the *Epistles*, but, also as a unit, the fourth book of the *Dunciad*, which I am inclined to think the most striking manifestation of his genius. It is certainly satire, and I know of nothing that demonstrates more irresistibly that satire can be great poetry.

An adequate estimate of Pope would go on to describe the extraordinary key-position he holds, the senses in which he stands between the Seventeenth and the Eighteenth Centuries. Communications from the Metaphysicals do not pass beyond him; he communicates forward, not only with Johnson, but also (consider, for instance, *Eloïsa to Abelard*) with Thomson and Gray—it was not for nothing that he was so interested in Milton. But here is obviously matter for many pages.

F. R. LEAVIS.

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COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

THE ESSAYIST AT LARGE.

The aim and manner of the eighteenth century essay may be seen in this passage by Addison:

'Having thus taken my Resolutions to march on boldly in the Cause of Virtue and good Sense, and to annoy their Adversaries in whatever Degree or Rank of Men they may be found: I shall be deaf for the future to all the Remonstrances that shall be made to me on this Account. If *Punch* grows extravagant, I shall reprimand him very freely: If the Stage becomes a Nursery of Folly and Impertinence, I shall not be afraid to animadvert upon it. In short, if I meet with anything in City, Court, or Country, that shocks Modesty or good Manners, I shall use my utmost Endeavours to make an Example of it.'

Lamb and Hazlitt cheapened the essay into a vehicle for charming whimsicalities (the latter contributing as well gusto, later to become heartiness), and have had many successors through Stevenson and C. E. Montague to the copywriter. Three quotations reveal the vices of this conception of 'style':

(a) 'This is Saloop—the precocious herb-woman's darling—the delight of the early gardener, who transports his smoking cabbages by break of day from Hammersmith to Covent Garden's famed piazzas—the delight, and, oh! I fear, too often the envy, of the unpennied sweep. Him shouldest thou haply encounter, with his dim visage pendent over the grateful stream, regale him with a sumptuous basin (it will cost thee but three half-pennies) and a slice of delicate bread and butter (an added half-penny)—so may

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thy culinary fires, eased of the o'er-charged secretions from thy worse-placed hospitalities, curl up a lighter volume to the welkin—so may the descending soot never taint thy costly well-ingredienced soups—nor the odious cry, quick-reaching from street to street, of the *fired chimney*, invite the rattling engines from ten adjacent parishes, to disturb for a casual scintillation thy peace and pocket! '

(b) ' Cities given, the problem was to light them. How to conduct individual citizens about the burgess-warren, when once heaven had withdrawn its leading luminary? or—since we live in a scientific age—when once our spinning planet has turned its back upon the sun? The moon, from time to time, was doubtless very helpful ; the stars had a cheery look among the chimney-pots ; and a cresset here and there, on church and citadel, produced a fine pictorial effect, and, in places where the ground lay unevenly, held out the right hand of conduct to the benighted. But sun, moon, and stars abstracted or concealed, the night-faring inhabitant had to fall back—we speak on the authority of old prints—upon stable lanthorns two stories in height. Many holes, drilled in the conical turret-roof of this vagabond Pharos, let up spouts of dazzlement into the bearer's eyes ; and as he paced forth in the ghostly darkness, carrying his own sun by a ring about his finger, day and night swung to and fro and up and down about his footsteps. Blackness haunted his path ; he was beleaguered by goblins as he went ; and, curfew being struck, he found no light but that he travelled in throughout the township.'

(c) ' In this wonderful London of ours perhaps there is to-day no more wonderful shop than the establishment of Kenneth Greene. It is (as it were) a Sartorial Temple where the earnest seeker may find all that he desires—things both inside and intimate for his personal comfort, and things outer for the gracious offsetting of his person and delectation of the world in general, from the shoe upon his foot to the hat wherewith he crowns his manhood.

Hither, perchance, might steal the most hirsute unwashed, the most deplorably dingy and ragged of tramps who, sidling unobtrusively within its portals, should presently stride forth bathed, manicured, barbered, pedicured, smooth-shaven and radiantly clad from head to foot—a being regenerate.'

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The first is by Lamb, the second by Stevenson, and the third a modern advertisement—it is proper that this 'quaint,' affected manner should end up as the handmaid of publicity, and that copywriters should be regularly advised to model their work on R. L. Stevenson. Thanks to the examination system, this jejune trifling is stuffed down the throats of thousands of children every year, as 'Literature': many intelligent victims will thereafter avoid literature. But the vices of the modern essayist do not reside in 'Style' alone. 'The point of the essay is not the subject, for any subject will suffice, but the charm of personality. It must concern itself with something jolly . . .' writes Mr. A. C. Benson in *The Art of the Essayist*. 'The writer must not be too interested in the action and conduct of life . . . he must be essentially tolerant.' His charm 'depends upon giving the sense of a good-humoured, gracious and reasonable personality and establishing a sort of pleasant friendship with his reader.' 'He convinces men and women that life is a fine sort of game . . . not finding anything common or unclean.' Incidentally it is interesting to note that the complementary conception of poetry as 'uplift' is found explicitly in this essay of Mr. Benson.

The purveyor of essays nowadays works by identifying himself with the reader, and flattering him; he exploits *ad nauseam* his fake personality—A.G.G. for instance is so anxious to reassure his reader-self that he exists that in one essay he mentions himself nine times in six lines. The man-in-the-street reader is persuaded not to take things too seriously, that he is 'definitely a benedick, a man's man,' and that his prejudices (due to laziness or stupidity) about art are infallible. The tendencies remarkable in R.L.S. and developed by Mr. Belloc and others are now much more pronounced—they fit in with the attitudes promoted by advertising. Stevenson said that 'to know a good cigar' was a 'really useful art,' and he was responsible for the view, which Mr. Belloc would approve, that Men who Do Things matter more than poets. Mr. Lynd writes regularly to the same effect, and his influence is not negligible. In an editorial column of the *New Statesman and Nation* we read: 'Now that a selection of the best of Y.Y. is published in book form . . . I do not see why, as a fellow contributor, I should not say just how wonderful an essayist I think Y.Y. is. I have come across numbers of people who regard him as their

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spiritual and mental saviour, a sane companion in a world of mad guides.' And he is regarded as a model for young writers. He hopes that ' literary criticism may yet set itself free from the aridity of intellectualism and become as human as a squabble after closing-time,' while one of his favourite doctrines is ' that no man is any good who is incapable of getting drunk.' Another doctrine seems intended to nullify the serious parts of the paper in which it appeared:

' It seems to me arguable that ordinary human beings cannot bear the strain of perpetual seriousness and that therefore they do well occasionally to cease thinking about high matters, and to escape into pursuits called petty and frivolous. That is why I like, in the morning, to read the more trivial letters in the newspapers.'

And we gather that one of them ' in the middle of the world crisis, seems to me to show a perfect sense of proportion. As one reads these letters, one realizes that the world is fairly sane after all . . .' There is evidence, by the way, that this sort of writing goes along with a taste for uplift of the L. P. Jacks brand. Essays with similar recipes are supplied in large numbers by other specialists, Messrs. Brown and Gould, for instance ; a specimen of the latter's hearty smartness opens: ' It has long been recognized that *Hamlet* needed re-writing—ever since, indeed, Mr. T. S. Eliot (this is where you laugh, boys) discovered that the play was an artistic failure.' Thus the essay's function has been completely reversed: Addison, Steele, Johnson, Goldsmith and others used the essay as a lay-pulpit to improve the reader's spiritual manners by disturbing his complacency ; to-day it is a profitable channel for vulgarity, ' low-brow ' propaganda, and a studied irresponsibility.

DENYS THOMPSON.

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MR. ELIOT AT HARVARD

THE USE OF POETRY AND THE USE OF CRITICISM, by T. S. Eliot (Faber and Faber, 7/6d. net).

It is clear, and Mr. Eliot insists that it shall be clear, that this book is dominated by its origin as a course of lectures of a not very technical kind. Inevitably therefore the writing is loose in texture. What is more regrettable is that the general plan of the course only partially succeeds in knitting together its parts, and some sections, as for instance that on Keats, seem to be little more than lecture making. The material has been organized partly around a few general themes and partly chronologically, but the two orders fail to reinforce each other. The chronological treatment of the criticism of poetry, from Sir Philip Sidney to Dr. I. A. Richards, doesn't effectively illuminate the main themes: namely, those of the reader's concern with a poet's ethical and social convictions, of the impossibility of describing poetry as communication, of belief during the reading of poetry, of the attempt to regard poetry as a substitute for religion. And the concern with historical material prevents Mr. Eliot from carrying very far any direct attacks upon these problems. Needless to say, what he contributes is admirable and often suggests a more complete view, but it is seldom that his probing is deep enough or his formulations accurate enough to be completely satisfactory.

The most accurate statement of his views is to be found in the brief remarks on communication. ' We have to communicate—if it is communication, for the word may beg the question—an experience which is not an experience in the ordinary sense, for it may only exist, formed out of many personal experiences ordered in some way which may be very different from the way of valuation of practical life, in the expression of it. *If* poetry is a form of " communication," yet that which is to be communicated is the poem itself, and only incidentally the experience and the thought which have gone into it.' This sparse and accurate

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statement of observable fact contrasts strangely with the following, which the audience presumably preferred: 'What I call the "auditory imagination" is the feeling for syllable and rhythm, penetrating far below the conscious levels of thought and feeling, invigorating every word; sinking to the most primitive and forgotten, returning to the origin and bringing something back, seeking the beginning and the end.' In such a passage as this, looseness of texture becomes almost laxity.

On the most important topic of the book, that of the significance of the poet's motives and beliefs, Mr. Eliot's formulated views are less acceptable than those on communication, although his contribution of obvious good sense to a confused problem is exceptionally welcome from such a writer. Combating the view of Dr. I. A. Richards he asserts the inevitable importance for the reader of the poet's personal convictions. He supports this less by generalized arguments than by appealing to his own experience in the enjoyment of poetry, by far the most impressive method he could have adopted. But his statement of his own position is not altogether satisfactory. 'When the doctrine, theory, belief, or "view of life" presented in a poem is one which the reader can accept as coherent, mature, and founded on the facts of experience, it interposes no obstacle to the reader's enjoyment, whether it be one that he accept or deny, approve or deprecate.' Although the general meaning of this—as one would grasp it in listening to the lecture—seems sound enough, its exact verbal form, if insisted on, leaves several difficulties unsolved. It must be observed first, of course, that the way is still open for Mr. Eliot to maintain that an even fuller enjoyment of the poem is available to those who do share the poet's beliefs, as he asserts at one point in the Dante essay. But if so, belief is an obstacle, or its absence a deprivation of a means, to the *full* enjoyment of the poem; and hence to say merely that a doctrine 'interposes no obstacle to the reader's enjoyment' is to evade, at least verbally, the whole question, which hinges on the *degree* of enjoyment possible. The phrase 'facts of experience' raises a further doubt. If it stands for 'the more obvious facts of experience' the general sense of the passage remains clear. But if it means '*all* the facts of the reader's experience' then it is difficult to see how the reader could fail to *believe* a coherent and mature doctrine founded upon 'the facts

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of experience.' The difficulty becomes more apparent in the following sentence: 'I can only regret that Shelley did not live to put his poetic gifts, which were certainly of the first order, at the service of more tenable beliefs—which need not have been, for my purposes, beliefs more acceptable to me.' One asks at first how it is that a belief can be more tenable, supposing it possible to have degrees of tenability in belief, without thereby becoming to that extent more acceptable to Mr. Eliot. But one then sees that a muddled belief which included some fact of experience regarded by Mr. Eliot as essential, might be in a sense more 'acceptable' to him than another belief which ignored that fact and yet through its greater coherence was more 'tenable.' This depends, however, on there being a distinction between the 'tenable' and the 'acceptable' belief. At this point I give up, hesitating whether to bequeath the problem to Mr. Empson or to an orthodox psychologist.

What from his wider context Mr. Eliot seems to suggest is that some views which we regard as heresies, nevertheless bring together enough of the facts of our experience for us to sympathize with them, and to realize that, given certain differences of experience, we could have accepted them as true doctrine. Other heresies are altogether too far removed from anything that might have appealed to us and we are therefore only repelled. This to the simple-minded would seem the natural consequence of the natural view that your like or dislike for a poem or a poet's work is affected by every aspect of his performance and all you know about him. The inevitable conclusion is that in enjoying and in judging poetry one must try to preserve a difficult balance: 'On the one hand the critic may busy himself so much with the implications of a poem, or of one poet's work—implications moral, social, religious or other—that the poetry becomes hardly more than a text for a discourse . . . Or if you stick too closely to the "poetry" and adopt no attitude towards what the poet has to say, you will tend to evacuate it of all significance.'

In some ways the most valuable parts of the book and those that make it fascinating to read are its glimpses of Mr. Eliot's personal opinions on a great variety of topics—Marxist criticism, English literature in a school curriculum, the potential value of the theatre to the poet. Even more interesting are the fragments of

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personal history that he scatters through the lectures and the comments he makes from time to time upon his intentions and methods in his own poetry. Among the incidental literary evaluations which occur, the most important is the reproof of Herbert Read for having occupied himself too much with ' casting out devils ' from the tradition of English literature. As an alternative to the view of daemonic possession in English literature from Milton to Wordsworth Mr. Eliot suggests the valuable analogy of the dissociated personality. And he is concerned to recover to the complete tradition those valuable aspects of writing which one line of poets relied upon too exclusively. This concern acounts for Mr. Eliot's anxiety to see justice done to the unfashionable poets, from Milton to A. E. Housman. At times, however, the same desire seems to join forces with a readiness to say what can be said—sometimes equivocally—for the merely academically acceptable.

The latter part of the book consists largely in attacks upon the view that poetry can be a substitute for religion. At this point the strength, perhaps, of Mr. Eliot's convictions, combined with the effect of a popular audience, seems to make his onslaught a little unfair. His prolonged poking of fun at Dr. Richards's sincerity ritual would have been unnecessary with more mature hearers—a quotation or two would have been enough. And his merciless insistence on the literal meaning of Matthew Arnold's ' criticism of life ' is in striking contrast with his generous concern to make Dryden intelligible. As for the more positive final contributions, all, coming from him, are valuable and interesting, but, as Mr. Eliot would readily agree, a full and definite account of the use of poetry and the use of criticism is still far to seek, if, indeed, it is conceivable.

D. W. HARDING.

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THE LATEST YEATS

THE WINDING STAIR AND OTHER POEMS, by W. B. Yeats (Macmillan, 6/-).

Those admirers of Yeats who found *Words for Music Perhaps* disappointing will not find this new and larger collection, which includes the earlier, less so. One had, of course, no right to set the standard of one's expectations by *The Tower,* but, naturally, one did.

The present book, in theme and general tone, bears a close relation to *The Tower,* but contains nothing as good as the best of that. The proud sardonic tension—it would be marvellous if it were otherwise—is slackened. It is with a different irony that Yeats here, in *Byzantium,* which corresponds to the *Sailing to Byzantium* of *The Tower,* contemplates the ' artifice of eternity ' :

> I hail the superhuman ;
> I call it death-in-life and life-in-death.

Soul, though still studying ' monuments of its own magnificence,' hardly now ' claps its hands and sings ' ; what was an astringency in the exaltation is now a sterile bitterness—the ' miracle ' is itself ' embittered ' :

> Miracle, bird or golden handiwork,
> More miracle than bird or handiwork,
> Planted on the starlit golden bough,
> Can like the cocks of Hades crow,
> Or, by the moon embittered, scorn aloud
> In glory of changeless metal
> Common bird or petal
> And all the complexities of mire or blood.

The world of sense, the pride and beauty of life, so potently present in *Sailing to Byzantium,* are now merely (though there is a ' dolphin ') ' complexities of mire and blood,' and spirit, ' blood-

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begotten,' that would escape the ' complexities,' is seen striving in tortured impotence—

> Dying into a dance,
> An agony of trance,
> An agony of flame that cannot singe a sleeve.

We are left in the end in bitter contemplation of

> Those images that yet
> Fresh images beget,
> That dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented sea.

The realm of time and sense is elsewhere in the book a more rich and positive presence, but nowhere is there that vital tension between counter-attracting presences which makes the finest poetry of *The Tower*. What is, instead, characteristic of *The Winding Stair* is something (see, for instance, *At Algeciras—A Meditation upon Death*) on which our first comment, ' this is too elliptical,' amplifies itself immediately with ' and too passive ' ; the constituents are inert. Another way of putting it is suggested by the title of one of the poems ; instead of tension we have vacillation. *Vacillation* offers us this dialogue :

> *The Soul.* Seek out reality, leave things that seem.
> *The Heart.* What, be a singer born and lack a theme?
> *The Soul.* Isaiah's coal, what more can man desire?
> *The Heart.* Struck dumb in the simplicity of fire!
> *The Soul.* Look on that fire, salvation walks within.
> *The Heart.* What theme had Homer but original sin?

The relaxed grasp betrays itself most notably, perhaps, in the Crazy Jane poems. The preoccupations of these are Mr. Yeats's—Time and the unrealness of the transitory :

> And that was all my song—
> When everything is told,
> Saw I an old man young
> Or young man old?

The ' artifice of eternity ' and the ' monuments of unaging intellect ' mean nothing to Crazy Jane ; they can provide no stay.

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Nor need she bother about relating things, or about their significance at all ; we are certainly not to look to her for coherence. She can be ' mad as the mist and snow.' This, actually, is the refrain, not of one of the Crazy Jane sequence, but of a poem that comes directly from Mr. Yeats. Clearly, the resolution, accommodation or *détente* to be arrived at with the help of Crazy Jane (or Tom the Lunatic—a *persona* who, significantly, is sometimes plain Yeats undisguised) has its advantages. There is often, no doubt, a poignant queerness, a pregnant simplicity, a profound naïvety ; but in this kind of simplification something is apt to be unsatisfactory in the poignant, the pregnant and the profound. To say that reading these poems one has sometimes to repel the thought of Mr. G. K. Chesterton would be to make the point far too heavily ; nevertheless, something tending that way has to be said.

What is also significant, and can be fairly said, is that Mr. Yeats's contemplation, in this book, of Time and the transitory reminds us again and again of Mr. De La Mare:

> Behold that great Plotinus swim
> Buffeted by such seas ;
> Bland Rhadamanthus beckons him,
> But the Golden Race looks dim,
> Salt blood blocks his eyes.
>
> Scattered on the level grass
> Or winding through the grove
> Plato there and Minos pass,
> There stately Pythagoras
> And all the choir of Love.

The lovely *Parting* might actually pass for Mr. De La Mare's.

There is, of course, a great deal in the book that is both good and characteristic, even if the kind of critical attention that is Mr. Yeats's due yields a report that may seem ungracious. Need it be said that *The Winding Stair* is, in any case, one of the very few literary events of the year? To be reminded that we have still in this age, honouring the English language, a spirit so austere and fine is an occasion for gratitude.

F. R. LEAVIS.

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HENRYSON, CHAUCER AND THE 'SCOTTISH LANGUAGE'

THE POEMS AND FABLES OF ROBERT HENRYSON. Edited by H. Harvey Wood (Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh, 12/6d.).

'Indeed, in offering this edition to the public, the editor ventures a claim for Henryson, which, he is confident, the poems will sustain, that he is without equal, the greatest of the Scots makars.' This is not the first time that this claim has been made, and left to the poems themselves to sustain. Generally it is claimed that Henryson has more 'humanity' than Dunbar. But 'humanity,' by itself, is too general a term to be a critical one. Mr. Harvey Wood, the new editor, attempts to be more definite, but does not, I think, succeed. What in effect he says is that 'technically' Henryson is not so original as Dunbar, but that 'essentially' he is more so. 'Technical equipment' and the 'essentials of poetry,' which in practice are one, are here thought of as separate. (See pp. 14-15, Introduction).

Chaucer's total achievement, and, to a much lesser extent, probably Dunbar's, exhibits from its beginnings through its maturity to its decay a continuous development and in this sense is complete. Henryson's on the other hand, is, though considerable, fragmentary. The *Moral Fables* and the *Testament of Cresseid*, which form the bulk of it, give the impression of being the work of an old man. His total achievement has not (though this does not necessarily follow) the range of Dunbar's, nor except in the *Testament of Cresseid* the intensity. It is narrower in this sense without (except in the *Testament*) the compression Dunbar's has.

Not that compression is in itself a test. The complexity of Chaucer's *Troilus*, for example, is not appreciable in a single line, as the complexity of a Shakespeare dramatic poem very often is. It becomes appreciable, because of the diffusion, only after one has been reading for a considerable stretch. Henryson's *Testament*

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appears to have been done at greater pressure not merely than the rest of his work, which is probably inferior to it, but than Chaucer's *Troilus* which is superior to it. The two poems are of course totally different, but why the *Testament* is felt to be the less satisfactory, in spite of its pressure, is because it presents a much less complex balance.

The *Troilus* has been called a novel. There are many elements in it, it is true, which have been present in the novel and absent for long from verse. *The Waste Land, Hugh Selwyn Mauberley,* have taken up into their verse elements which have long been abandoned to prose. *Ulysses, To the Lighthouse,* on their part, have suggested that the point has been reached when a further fertilizing carry-over from the novel to verse is not only possible but urgent. What therefore particularly interests a modern in the *Troilus* is that here verse is doing not merely as much as the prose of any novel but considerably more. The conversational intimacy the verse has acquired from French and Italian verse establishes an understanding between poet and reader. They share between them a superior wisdom—' thise sely loveres.'[1] They *know*. The sophistication of the verse, because it implies a sophisticated attitude on the part of poet and reader, itself implies a criticism of the love extravagance. It is possible, for example, to point to this as the effect of, here and there, a peculiarly conscious rhyme, such as happens again in *Venus and Adonis* and *Don Juan*. Everything else follows. The Pandarus and the Troilus elements in the poem form, by their co-presence there, an implicit criticism the one of the other. Chaucer, that is to say, re-does the Boccaccio stuff comically and, at the same time, sympathetically. The poem probably shocked its first readers, as every really new poem does: Chaucer seems somewhat concerned about this.

Nothing of Henryson's exhibits this profound sophistication. His work is that of a serious good man. Nevertheless the *Testament* is in its own particular way a startling emanation of the Mediæval mind. Mr. Harvey Wood remarks that it is impossible to over-estimate the debt of Henryson to Chaucer (p. 31). The *Testament* itself suggests that this is exactly what is possible. Chaucer and

[1] I hope no one will take me to suppose that ' sely ' is the equivalent of the modern ' silly.'

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Henryson wrote in general in traditions which were common to both: it is therefore not always easy to estimate the indebtedness of the latter to the former. But the *Testament*, besides being unmistakably original, which does not disprove its indebtedness, contains unexpected things if one attempts to read it in relation to Chaucer. The evocation of the phantasmagoria of the Ancient Gods, to take the thing in it which is in a sense least personal, is in a manner which is scarcely Chaucerian, yet which began before Henryson and persists into Sackville's *Induction*.

Henryson is on the whole more ' popular ' than either Chaucer or Dunbar. This is less immediately obvious in the *Testament* than in the *Moral Fables* and certain of the minor poems. The majority of the *Fables* are based on a Latin text of Æsop. But a number are drawn from the popular Reynardian cycle and a broad folk element is present throughout. The Chaucerian refinement of the verse, French and Italian in origin, is crossed in the *Fables* and in the *Testament* by the native alliterative type (of which the *Sum Practysis of Medecyne* is a superb example). The verse is reinvigorated (as Dunbar's is also) from this source. Certain of the minor poems, on their part, bear an obvious relation to the ballad.

This more ' popular ' quality of Henryson is both his strength and his weakness. He is more ' popular ' because he is more ' local.' He is further from the European centre than either Chaucer or Dunbar (perhaps partly because he is not of the court). Yet he is not more Scottish than Dunbar. Mr. Harvey Wood, like many of his predecessors, is very concerned to establish the Scottishness of Henryson (see pp. 15-18). It is unnecessary to go into the question of national characteristics. The verse of Henryson and Dunbar is Scottish in the first instance because the idiom it is written in is Scottish (or later came to be known as such). Mr. Harvey Wood remarks of this language, ' It is not a spoken, historical dialect of the Scottish language at any period: but an artificial, created, " literary " language ' (p. 31). The fact remains that this ' literary ' language was created out of a staple of ' spoken ' language. The reason why there can be no ' literary ' Scots to-day is because there is no longer a ' spoken ' Scots.

JOHN SPEIRS.

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THE CASE OF MR. POUND

ACTIVE ANTHOLOGY. Edited by Ezra Pound (Faber and Faber, 7/6d.).

Serious discussion of this book must address itself rather to the compiler than to the contents. For Ezra Pound, at any rate, is a seriously representative phenomenon. How is it that the author of *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley*, which is indubitably a great contemporary poem, can exhibit himself, in offering us a choice view of the significant contemporary developments in his art, as completely without critical intelligence or perception? *Active Anthology* does indeed contain Mr. Eliot's *Fragment of a Prologue* ; but one good poem does not make a bad anthology better, nor do two or even three.

The explanation will have to be a potent one, for it is impossible to suppose that the author of *Mauberley* is, as a critic, congenitally impotent. Explanation would seem to fall under two main heads. Both, however, come within the inclusive formula: Mr. Pound was faced with doing for himself far more than even great genius can be fairly asked to do. In dedicating himself, as he so gallantly did, to English poetry at such a time and in such an environment, he might well find a certain swagger and a certain truculence helpful and even necessary. He might pardonably cultivate the conviction that he, championing his cause and his talent in a world of deaf, malignant and obstructive fools, could never be wrong. The need for some sense of a congenial world, some kind of group-solidarity, is irresistible, and he might be excused for choosing to associate with those who encouraged his belief in himself, even if it were by applauding and playing up to his more immature gestures and attitudes of self-encouragement.

A man who, being so placed, is also (and this is the second head) without an elementary apparatus of critical analysis, will be remarkable if he doesn't become to a damaging degree the slave of his confirmed immaturities and of his egotisms more and less subtle. It is no use pointing out to Mr. Pound any of the fundamental weaknesses of his critical positions: he will not listen or

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look. Tell him what is wrong with his conception of technique—explain to him painstakingly, with simple illustrations, just how the inadequacies in analysis that are betrayed by his ' Melopoeia, Phanopoeia, Logopoeia ' invalidate most of his subsequent critical offerings—and he will reply to the world at large that certain ' young academes ' or ' assistant professors ' carp pedantically at his lists of prescribed works or advocate the reading of books about books instead of (like Mr. Pound) the reading of poetry. He will never take any notice of the essential points. He cannot ; he has become as incapable of disinterested re-orientation as the ' bureaucrats ' whom he scorns, and the adolescent audacities of the public antics (and private ' epistolary style ') with which he thinks to prove the contrary are as boring and as monotonous as the ' bureaucratic ' decorum.

The contents of this anthology corroborate in a desolating way the criticisms one had to make of *How To Read*. The inadequate conception of ' technique ' goes with a readiness to take general intentions (if the intentions are such as Mr. Pound approves of) for the achieved thing, however remote they may be from realization in particulars. This is the most charitable explanation of the inclusion, for instance, of so much nullity by Mr. Louis Zukofsky. The less charitable explanation is that Mr. Zukofsky is well known as an approved expositor of Mr. Pound. Anyone, it seems, however green and tender or hardened in wordy illiteracy, can become an approved expositor of the *Cantos*. We may expect Mr. Pound to find more poets whom he can expect to find interesting in ten years' time.

Further, Mr. Pound's notions of good general intentions are both inadequate and out-of-date. There might, for instance, have been some show of point in presenting William Carlos Williams to the British public fifteen years ago. But it isn't the wordy debility of Georgianism that needs reacting against to-day. As for the inadequacies, they go with the inadequacy, exhibited in *How To Read,* of Mr. Pound's notion of what a literature is.

Mr. Pound is paid the compliment of this attention because of his past services to literature (not that one can expect from him any but the routine response) and because he looks like becoming a serious nuisance. The difficulty of making a public for modern poetry is desperate enough in any case, and Mr.Pound's encourage-

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ment of the bogus will, now that the name of the *Cantos* is familiar to the Sunday papers, not tend to make things easier.

But the judgment of one who looks at the *Active Anthology* through bone-rimmed spectacles and over a stiff collar, preserving with academic fastidiousness the creases in his ' lecturer's pants ' (see Mr. MacLeish in the current *Hound and Horn*), won't worry Mr. Pound.

F. R. LEAVIS.

LYTTON STRACHEY

CHARACTERS AND COMMENTARIES, by Lytton Strachey (Chatto and Windus, 10/6d.).

This is a reprint of most of Lytton Strachey's journalism which has not already been collected. The essays and reviews which it contains date from 1905-1931. Most of them are literary (about Horace Walpole, Mrs. Inchbald, Fanny Burney, Voltaire); a few are biographical (about Lord Morley, Frederick the Great, the First Earl of Lytton). The Leslie Stephen Lecture on Pope is also included.

The whole book has considerable documentary value ; since it reveals clearly (almost naïvely) some of the fundamental characteristics of its author ; and, consequently, of contemporary belletrism.

First, for his style. This is, of course, ' impeccable.' It starts by echoing Browne. ' The end of Time is more favourable to epistolary immortality than its beginnings and its maturity: the barbarism of an early age and the unrest of a vigorous one are alike unpropitious to the preservation of letters.' Other peoples' cadences become less obvious as time goes on ; Gibbon is heard occasionally, and Johnson. Here is an example:

> ' His vehemence could be content with no ordinary moderation, either in the callous or the lachrymose ; and the same amazing force which made Prussia a Great Power created, in spite of incredible difficulties, in a foreign idiom, under the bondage of the harshest literary conventions ever known, that vast mass of

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fifth-rate poetising from which shuddering History averts her face.'

Look at the ' and ' following the semi-colon, and the stock piling of clauses which follows it. It is very competently done ; but it is a mere tasteful (or tasty) pastiche, and nothing more. The first quotation comes from an undergraduate essay, written in 1905. The second was published in the *New Statesman* in 1917.

Next, for the biographical essays. His biographies are Strachey's most ambitious works. They have been accepted as valuable, brilliant, and new. Almost every reviewer of biographical or historical works in, for example, the *New Statesman* compares them with Strachey's. They are either like him, or unlike him ; either influenced or uninfluenced by him. Obviously, *Queen Victoria* and *Eminent Victorians* have become a criterion, a touchstone. Also, they sold well ; they have imitators ; and Mr. Philip Guedalla gets published in *Good Housekeeping*, M. André Maurois delivers the Clarke Lectures at Cambridge.

This success among the ' middlebrow ' public was, I think, based on the fact that Strachey, competently and directly, with judicious subtlety, and appropriately Freudian and free-thinking seasoning, appealed to that desire for fantasy satisfaction through ' characters ' or substitute lives, which is the basis of commercial fiction. His attitude flattered post-war up-to-date mechanized amoralism ; and he was also skilfully sentimental—' but the future was hidden, and all that was certain was that the past had gone for ever, and that his eyes would rest no more upon the snapdragons of Trinity.' His formula was the familiar Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer heart-throb and mirthquake one. His readers had it both ways.

The literary criticism in this volume is nothing but strings of epithets. Here are a few:

' The originality of his thought: the beauty of his language: and the subtle splendour of his emotions '

' the polished pomp of —'s sentences '

' his brilliant embittered little book '

' his exquisite, sensuous, and high-sounding oratory '

' the profound obscurity of — and — '

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The subjects of these remarks are Shakespeare, Donne, La Rouchefoucauld, Racine, Gibbon and T. S. Eliot. It doesn't really matter to whom the remarks are applied. When Strachey deals with a period dilettante like Horace Walpole, he creates ' atmosphere ' well enough, for what it is worth. Always the patina, not the form, excites him. He never discusses contemporary literature. The only thing he can say of *Satires of Circumstance* is, that ' the originality of [Th. Hardy's] poetry lies in the fact that it bears everywhere upon it the impress of a master of prose fiction.'

But the most revealing essay here is that on Matthew Arnold, in which, avoiding any attempt to assess the problem which confronted Arnold—how to keep tradition and value alive in spite of commerce settling on every tree—he contents himself with ridiculing the famous phrase about poetry being ' a criticism of life.' The point is not whether Arnold's proposed solutions (academic and so on) of this problem were right or wrong, but whether his general attitude to literature and the tradition of English culture was or was not worth defending.

These are the concluding sentences of the essay:

> ' He might, no doubt, if he had chosen, have done some excellent and lasting work upon the movements of glaciers or the fertilization of plants, or have been quite a satisfactory collector in an up-country district in India. But no ; he *would* be a critic.'

It is impossible to read Strachey for long without finding many passages like this, compact of snobbery and querulous inferiority feelings.

Incapable of creation in life or in literature, his writings were his substitute for both. No wonder he has readers. But more surprisingly, he has a following. Though Sitwellism is no longer *chic,* Strachey is an influence in life as well as in letters ; he set a tone which still dominates certain areas of the highbrow world—*e.g.* that part of Bloomsbury which has a well-known annex in Cambridge. The deterioration and collapse represented by Mrs. Woolf's latest phase (*Orlando, Common Reader* 2nd Series, *Flush*) is one of the most pernicious effects of this environment.

T. R. BARNES.

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TOWARDS STANDARDS OF CRITICISM, Selections from The Calendar of Modern Letters. Edited with an Introduction by F. R. Leavis (Wishart, 5/-).

Almost everybody would agree that the standard of literary criticism in England to-day, certainly in so far as this means the reviewing of contemporary publications, is lower than it has ever been before. An age in which the reviewer is the spoilt darling, if not the actual paid servant of the publisher ; in which an Arnold Bennett can spend two-thirds of an ostensibly critical article discussing women's make-up, and in which the reviewer of a book on Sobiesky can fail to notice that it is not about Pilsudski: such an age can hardly claim respect for its critical integrity. But instances are superfluous where the fact is patent. What is more interesting, what is certainly worth further investigation, is the complex of reasons for the existing state of affairs. And it is important here to distinguish, as Mr. Bertram Higgins insisted when discussing the subject in *The Calendar,* between those factors which refer to the *personnel,* the actual practitioners of criticism, and those which spring, directly or indirectly, from the social and economic system under which we live.

Let us take the latter first. Mr. Leavis puts his finger on the crucial spot when he speaks of ' the modern disintegration.' There is no need at this juncture to discuss the implications of that phrase, which have been elaborated ably and often enough in these pages. It is not only that the possible audience for a picture or a poem has decreased steadily with the disappearance of a homogeneous public: what Mr. Edwin Muir calls ' a central binding tradition ' ; but that it has been found profitable to exploit commercially the unformed artistic appetite of the numerous publics which have arisen instead. Books nowadays are ' news.' Why? Because ' news ' commands advertising revenue. And if the conversion of books from literature into ' news ' involves the substitution of hyperbole and social backchat for reasoned criticism—well, so much the worse for criticism. And for literature too, since the selection of books and their reviewers is no longer a matter of merit but of ' sales-value.'

And what of those who, like the critics of *The Calendar* whose work Mr. Leavis has selected, care enough about literature to want

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to give serious work serious consideration, and are anxious to uphold the standards of criticism? Their plight is unenviable. Conscious of isolation, of an unwanted and embarrassing superiority, their path is hedged round with difficulties and dangers. To be intelligent without becoming academic, and profound without obscurity, to present a solid front without suspicion of coterie and be confident without inviting the charge of priggishness: all these they must be if criticism is to perform the double function of assisting the creative artist and defining the boundaries (never more necessary than now) for the common reader. Sixty per cent. of the reviews in *The Calendar* fulfilled these conditions—a proportion large enough to justify the present reprint many times over. To be all this and to be scrupulously honest, avoiding the social-literary racket which has disqualified so many potential allies, precludes the chance of popularity under the existing *régime*. *The Calendar* set itself this standard, and paid the price.

I. M. PARSONS.

GOG-MAGOG, by G. W. Stonier (Dent, 7/6d.).

'A Lord Mayor's procession jogs by; the band plays.' (You can see some eagles. And hear the trumpets.). There is Hans Anderson hand in hand with Hopkins, Verdi cheek by jowl with Van Gogh (such a press of people), and, in the van, the big stuffed dummy of Mr. Stonier's fancy, Gog-Magog.

Of course, time (=money) is short, art and criticism are anyway paupers, Chelsea pensioners; and the purveyor must establish his credentials. Hence this ritual of penning up the year's blurbs, with an apologetic and 'provocative' leader, to swell a volume of chatter: a catchpenny treat for many in the street. Yet surely the silliest way to make a book. Selections of essays by Mr. Eliot, or Mr. Read, or Mrs. Woolf, however arbitrarily planned as books; or, equally, certain absolutely unsystematic critical works of Mr. Pound or Mr. Lewis; these are justified because their authors

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have exceptionally interesting minds. But the essays in the present book are not merely inadequately articulated by the opening essay ; they are not all in themselves organic wholes. Nor are Mr. Stonier's epigrams and quotations organic to his essays: they are random ' tastes ' at best with topical news-value. Mr. Stonier is an amicable and very breezy literary journalist. His book reveals a consistently interested, but rarely an interesting, mind. I mean merely a mind that is alert, curious, receptive—indeed too receptive, for sometimes it has poached as well as gleaned. The first forty pages read like pencil jottings rapidly transcribed from the margins of *Axel's Castle* ; (a source which does at least get footnote mention) but Mr. Stonier lacks even the excuse of a polemical intention when he tries to ' explain away ' the odd and numerous progeny of Flaubert. The best-written essay, on Wyndham Lewis, succeeds only by reducing a complex personality to a few simple, obvious and (I think) less important aspects. The same stricture applies to his treatment of less complex figures such as Lawrence and Joyce. When he comes to deal with Mr. Eliot in a dialogue (although passing comments have prepared us for much worse before we reach p. 140), Mr. Stonier reveals himself completely. For example:

> *Plain Reader :* Here is another book, I see, addressed to me . . . There is evidently a movement on foot to educate people in the post-war school. I suppose I shall read the book, if only to pretend that I have understood *The Waste Land* . . .
>
> *Critic* (parenthetically): I shall have to talk like a lecturer to get in what I want to say.

To return to the Stonier figure: Gog-Magog (whom the author has already equated with Bouvard-Pécuchet, Pullman-Satters, Bloom, Mr. and Mrs. Everyman), is in fact the new Plain (not Common) Reader, at the sophistication (not enlightenment) of whom this book is directed: an image of himself which will stagger the P.R. with its semblance of learning, insight and wit. There should be no lack of such readers. As for the minority: Mr. Stonier offers (as he knows) one more *symptom* for scrutiny.

HUGH GORDON PORTEUS.

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THE FIRST LORD MELCHETT

ALFRED MOND: FIRST LORD MELCHETT, by Hector Bolitho (Secker, 12/6d.).

This trashily-written and exceedingly readable biography leaves us with considerable respect for its subject and little for its author either as a man or as a literary gent. His style is cosmic gossip. Heads bow, bitter retorts fail to crystallize, a governor smooths out the wrinkles of a country's pain, something terrible comes out of the shadows of time. Here he is painting a word-picture:

'The symphony of marble circles was complete again, curve crossing curve, all leading to the central circle of clear water, water which was as still as the blue sky from which it took its colour; except when some Roman boy or girl rose up to the surface, naked and lissom, to rest wet brown hands upon the edge of the marble basin.'

This would not matter much perhaps if it were not accompanied by an attitude of mind which, in view of recent developments not only on the Continent and in America but also here, seems to be more prevalent than one had supposed, and to present no common danger. I mean Mr. Bolitho's conception of the admirable human being. A big strong man makes him swoon with pleasure. Mussolini, Mond, Beaverbrook, Goering, Al Capone, it's all the same. If you are large and able, rude though of course with a twinkle in the eye, ruthless though of course with a big heart, capable of working all night or putting a wench across your knee, you're alright with Mr. Bolitho as you are with Mr. Hemingway. What you do doesn't matter.

'That Alfred Mond exalted industry; that he became a Peer and Privy Councillor, and a Fellow of the Royal Society does not matter. What does matter in our estimate of him is his moral courage.'

I regard this attitude as pernicious and reactionary, a symptom of a terrified refusal to face the contemporary situation. The post-

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war debunkers were tiresome enough, God knows ; their motives were generally equally irrational, and they treated their subjects in the same way, as if they existed in a vacuum of personality, unaffected by their environment and unaffecting. But we want neither. We certainly want to hear about people's private lives, but only in order to understand their public ones. What matters to us about other people is what they do to us. If someone tells me that the man coming towards me with an axe has moral courage, I shall no doubt be pleased to hear it, but I should much rather know how he is going to show it. No biography is satisfactory that does not illuminate not only the motives but the results of the hero's actions, and estimate the latter consistently and rationally.

Mr. Bolitho does not. For example:

> ' Sir Alfred Mond stood up and had one fleeting glimpse of the Germans. His son pulled him down sharply, a few seconds before a bullet cracked past.
>
> " What is that? " he asked.
>
> " A German bullet," answered his son.
>
> " Who are they shooting at? "
>
> " You," he was told.
>
> Suddenly a fine and primitive passion possessed him. " Where is a bloody rifle, I'm going to have just one shot back."
>
> His son led him away. Sir Alfred Mond returned to Westminster inspired by terrible strength and ideas. He said in a speech to his electors, " I care not what views a man expressed before the War, or what views he is going to express when the War ceases. I say for God's sake let us join to win the War . . . We have to realize our enemy's cunning ; there has been too much killing our opponent with the mouth instead of with the bullet." '

This story may be true. It sounds only too probable. It is just the sort of way in which hatreds involving millions do originate. What is disquieting is Mr. Bolitho's naïve narration of it as if it were something admirable, instead of a terrible parable of human folly.

Again Mr. Bolitho introduces highly coloured scenes to explain Lord Melchett's emotions about art, and tells us very little about the development of his emotions about property. Lord Melchett was not an artist and we don't care in the least why he came to

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like Renaissance statues. He was an industrialist and a politician, and we should like to know very much how a German Jew came to abandon Europe for Empire Free Trade. There are hints certainly but Mr. Bolitho hardly seems to have recognized them as such or to have been much interested.

Alfred Mond's life history supports the contention that, of people who become remarkable in any way, few have a happy childhood and most pass through a critical period in early manhood when they appear to outsiders and anxious relatives as wasters. Ambition, it seems, is always the desire to overcome early emotional frustration, and there is a period when it is uncertain whether the frustration or the ambition will triumph, whether the latter will devise an adequate or a neurotic solution, freeze into sullen obscurity, liquefy into dissipated idleness, or assume a rational and living growth. The future peer might instead have become a card-sharper.

These reflections are of interest to us because the nature of the conflict dictates in some measure the nature of the solution. Man is neither completely free nor a mere puppet. There is freedom of choice, but within limits.

The conflict—a Jew and a foreigner—industry and cultured riches—a gruff authoritative father who prefers his elder brother—shame at his own clumsiness and physical ugliness.

The solution—the brilliant bureaucrat and industrialist—the anti-socialist—the Empire Crusader—the Zionist.

It is as a bureaucrat, as a practical administrator in the Office of Works and the Ministry of Health that he is most impressive:

> ' " The whole Book of Revelations occupies ten pages. I don't see why new wash-basins in the Revenue Office at Leeds should take a hundred pages. Take it away and bring us a short one, without details. It is for you to worry about those."
>
> " Our object in official life is not to get a minute written, pass the paper on to another individual or division and wash our hands of it, but to see that the person who writes to us actually gets his answer in decent time." '

Under whom could he have had most opportunity? Under Mr. Baldwin or the ' foolish and mad ' Stalin? The whole principle of bureaucracy is a socialist one. You do not possess—you

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administer. You are not a person, but a public servant; a conductor, not an owner of power. It implies interference and the end of *laissez-faire*. Yet this great official, who could make any companies merge he liked, could write of the land problem:

> ' " The only real cure is to enable the cultivator of the soil to be the master of his own destiny, and to leave it to him to make a success or a failure of his venture, and to trust to the working of general economic laws that, in the long run, the efficient will displace the inefficient." '

The truth is that all his talk about socialism levelling the clever to the level of the stupid is rationalizing poppycock. His reaction was emotional and irrational, a reaction against an unfamiliar world, without his art collections, without his papa. He still had to justify himself, remain personally a power. ' In a small country,' he once said, ' one could be an influence and a power.'

As a large-scale industrialist he knew the importance of internationalism, but—instead of a world union of republics, the British Empire, and finally Zion and the lights of home, the racial ideal. The boy who kicked the lonely football in Cheltenham for hours still limited his vision.

Had he lived longer, he would almost certainly have been a Fascist. Those who do not welcome Fascism, will be grateful to death for depriving it of a recruit of his talents and his calibre.

W. H. AUDEN.

ASPECTS OF THE RISE OF ECONOMIC INDIVIDUALISM, by H. M. Robertson. Cambridge Studies in Economic History, 1. (Cambridge University Press, 10/6d.).

The reception of Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904) illustrated the commonplace that theories flourish in so far as they are useful in contemporary controversy. Opponents of Puritanism and capitalism alike were pleased to believe that the attitudes fostered by the early Puritans played a leading part in shaping the spirit and the form of modern capitalism. ' What the great religious epoch of the 17th century bequeathed

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to its utilitarian successor was above all an amazingly good, we may even say a pharisaically good, conscience in the acquisition of money, so long as it took place legally ' is a convenient quotation. There have been protests (such as that of Mr. H. G. Wood in England) on behalf of the Puritans, and there have been protests (such as Mr. Butterfield's *Whig Interpretation of History*) against, as it were, reading history backwards in the light of ideas which have developed out of historical situations, but Weber has continued to enjoy a vague popular triumph, even among those who do not know his name.[1] It has been left to Mr. Robertson to prove that Weber's thesis will not bear critical examination, and to show once more that the approach to history which begins with abstract forces considered as the determinants of events is in general untrustworthy.

Mr. Robertson is not, of course, the first to point out that the Puritan doctrine of the ' calling ' was at first conservative and favourable to economic order, and that English Protestantism ' was very slow to sanction the fundamental condition of a wholeheartedly capitalist organization of society—freedom in the disposal of capital—on which the credit system depends,' but his three chapters on Protestant economic theory are valuable not only for their fresh material but for the way in which the argument is presented. For many he is on less familar ground when he illustrates the great development of pre-Reformation capitalism, and when he shows that Catholic teaching—particularly the teaching of the Jesuits, who were most in contact with the business world—at least kept pace with the economic ethics of the Reformers. Having disposed of the Protestantism = capitalism equation, he indicates the directions in which research on the beginnings of capitalism may most profitably be continued, namely in tracing the effects of the Discoveries, the growth of an international money market, the increased opportunities for speculative enterprise in trade and industry, and the

[1] A good many people appear to believe that Tawney's admirable *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* is little more than a documented illustration of Weber's theme. Mr. Tawney is in part to blame: his most important criticisms of Weber will be found in a small type note at the end of the book ; in his Introduction to the English translation of *Die protestantische Ethik*, in spite of certain reservations, he is more respectful.

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development of scientific book-keeping. The extremely good account of the speculation mania in England in the late 16th and early 17th centuries is of particular interest. Mr. Robertson's conclusion, which would have been obvious but for the controversial clouding of the issues, may be regarded as established: ' The spirit of capitalism is not the creator but the creation of the class of business men . . . The rise of the capitalist spirit is the same as the rise of economic rationalism—something which took place independently of Church teaching, on the basis of commercial experience. The great cause of the rise of the spirit of capitalism has been capitalism itself.'

L. C. KNIGHTS.

MR. CHRISTOPHER DAWSON

THE MAKING OF EUROPE, by Christopher Dawson (Sheed and Ward, 15/-).

ENQUIRIES INTO RELIGION AND CULTURE, by Christopher Dawson (Sheed and Ward, 8/6d.).

Notice of these books has been delayed in the hope that it might be possible to arrange for an article of some length on the work of Mr. Dawson. The hope has not yet materialized, and in default a frankly inadequate reference seems best. The importance of Mr. Dawson may be suggested by saying that, if one were entrusted with the planning of an Experimental College that should aim at providing for a modern humane education, he would be one of the first teachers one would try and enlist. Qualifications of his kind are very far from common, but someone possessing them would be found at every university if universities were performing their function. This is not to suggest that Mr. Dawson's books do not invite criticism. On the contrary, a critical review—or better, a discussion—of *Enquiries into Religion and Culture* would be an admirable exercise for a good group of students. Either of the books announced here would help them to formulate a commentary on Mr. Wells's latest educational work ; in this way Mr. Wells could be made really to serve the ends of education.

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SOCIAL EDDIES

RECENT SOCIAL TRENDS IN THE UNITED STATES (McGraw-Hill Book Company Inc., London, 60/- net).

It would take not one reviewer but a battalion of them to deal comprehensively with *Recent Social Trends*, for its twenty-nine chapters each present the findings of specialists who have surveyed a distinct aspect of American life. Family life, education, religion, recreation, natural resources, economic organization, metropolitan community life, and governmental functions are only a few of the topics treated, but they may serve as landmarks to suggest the area covered. Single-handed the reviewer's only practical course of action is to take his personal point of view and to stand by the peculiarities and inadequacies of that. In finding one's way about the book and seeing it as a whole, one is enormously helped by the introductory summary, in which the outstanding facts are organized and to some extent commented on. The separate chapters are largely occupied with detailed reporting, fact gathering, and the impartial observation of trends, and this part of the work seems in its way magnificently done. For this amount of co-ordinated official effort to be brought to bear upon social problems of the kind that interest cultured people is unusual and impressive. There are *lacunæ*, of course, but at least they can be located. And on a large number of topics about which many of us wish to make assertions this work provides a mass of authenticated data and documentation.

The work in itself, of course, is a document and a datum. Particularly in the summary where cautious hopes and ' veiled regrets ' are allowed to appear is it evident what a lack of standards and what uneasiness exist in the minds of these semi-official representatives of the community. It is noteworthy too in which directions they look for help and in which directions they don't.

' What,' they ask, ' are the prerequisites of a successful, long time constructive integration of social effort?

' Indispensable among these are the following:

' Willingness and determination to undertake important integral changes in the reorganization of social life, including the economic

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and the political orders, rather than the pursuance of a policy of drift.

' Recognition of the role which science must play in such a reorganization of life.

' Continuing recognition of the intimate interrelationship between changing scientific techniques, varying social interests and institutions, modes of social education and action and broad social purposes.'

And again, ' The Committee . . . finds its analytic description leading ever and again to a statement of problems which can be solved only by further scientific discoveries and practical inventions.' Of the churches we are told that their wealth has increased recently but that ' This is explained in part by the adoption of better techniques of raising contributions.' And of church organizations the Committee remarks, ' How their functions may evolve is a grave issue. One function is that of ministering to the needs of people who suffer in a world of stress and strain. Another is that of serving social and community life. Still another function is that of an ethical guide and force not only for individual but also for social conduct.' A little earlier however occurs the sentence, ' Ethics and religion have been traditionally united, but whether this association will continue may be problematical.' Cause for this last doubt is to be found in the detailed chapter devoted to ' Changing social attitudes and interests.' Here it is established that ' Antagonistic criticism of the church, of ministers and of traditional creeds reached a maximum in 1925-1928 in general magazines, and still exceeds the volume of favourable comment. The leading part in antagonistic criticism has been taken by the periodicals circulating among the more highly educated part of the population ; periodicals read by the great masses of the people reflect a growing lack of interest in rather than aggressive criticism of religion . . . Sexual irregularities, easy divorce and sex freedom in general have recently been approved to an extent entirely unprecedented in 1900-1905 in the channels studied. In magazine articles, challenges to traditional sex attitudes developed to a maximum between 1925 and 1928. In fiction, increased tolerance for violations of monogamistic sex mores on the part of heroines and heroes has been evident for all groups studied but

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especially for the "intellectual" periodicals. The wave of approval for sex freedom appears to have been closely associated with the decline of religious sanctions for sex conduct.'

It is interesting to see what the semi-official view has to be when these simple facts are given the backing of scientific investigators. It will have been seen that the only function attributed to the church with any confidence is that of fending off mental breakdown. Art and recreation too are regarded in the same light. 'From a social point of view, as contrasted with art for art's sake, the problem of art, like that of religion and recreation, turns to-day on its service to man in his inner adjustment to an environment which shifts and changes with unexampled rapidity. Art appears to be one of the great forces which stand between maladjusted man and mental breakdown, bringing him comfort, serenity and joy.' 'Environment' in this context seems to mean industrialized America and it is evident that the Committee can envisage no change in that except of the kind that leaves it even more the same.

It might be thought that education would help to resolve the strains set up between people and their environment. But in the view of the Committee education has a more urgent duty towards the 'environment' (in what appears to be their sense of the word) than to the individual. 'It will always be difficult to keep curricula in adjustment with changing times and with new knowledge. Some schools and colleges still offer courses which are survivals from the scholasticism of the Middle Ages. The proportion of emphasis to be placed on vocational courses and trade schools as compared with the proportion put on the less specifically utilitarian subjects is one of the questions of educational policy. A democracy with a mechanical civilization and with an increasing heterogeneity of shifting occupations must ask much of its schools.' And in fact this education finds itself competing with the recreation which is to ward off the mental breakdowns induced by the mechanical civilization that the education serves. 'With shorter hours of labor a program of education for adults may be developed and become widespread, although at present the great enemy to adult education is the competition of amusements.' And these, it appears from another section of the work, are a necessity: 'The popularity of the motion picture is shown by the fact that it has continued to attract large crowds in spite of the financial depression. It is

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apparently a necessary luxury, slow to feel cuts in the family budget. The important role it plays in the leisure time of the masses can hardly be exaggerated. Moderate in cost and almost universal in its appeal, it provides an easily accessible form of recreation especially adapted for a temporary escape from the routine of daily life.' It seems at least possible that the conceptions of education and of entertainment are both wrong where conflict exists between the two. This is a relevant consideration in England too, where we see the more responsible broadcasters watching with gratification the ratio of ' education ' to ' entertainment ' in the programmes creeping up.

Part of the conflict between education and recreation occurs on account of the unfortunate ways the public chooses for warding off its mental breakdowns. ' Americans have but scanty traditional equipment for amusing themselves gracefully and wholesomely. Advertisements set forth what our forefathers would have called temptations. We are urged to yield to their enticements by notions of human nature which differ radically from those entertained even in our own childhoods.' ' There can be no doubt of the right of the government to prevent the sale of unwholesome recreation just as it has the right to prevent the sale of unwholesome food. Questions involving morals, however, are hard to deal with, and the government faces serious perplexities when it attempts to operate in this field.' ' A growing proportion of people admit that workers on machines or in shops and offices need recreation, and many of them also demand that the municipality or state assumes censorship and control . . .

One of the problems which will still need attention in supplying this almost insatiable hunger for amusement and diversion is to devise a method by which the standards held essential by the community may be protected, at the same time allowing for the free play of new ideas and entertaining novelties.' Apparently the Committee's idea of amusement is a sort of bowdlerised saturnalia. As Mr. Eliot remarks in his recently published lectures, ' Farce and love-romances, especially if seasoned with scabrousness, are the two forms of entertainment upon which the human mind can most easily, lovingly and for the longest time maintain its attention . . . ' The possibility of *good* entertainment (commercial or not) seems not to have occurred to the Committee. The only

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alternatives they see to the recreation they deplore are ' churches, libraries, concerts, museums and adult education . . . '

On this topic as on everything else the Committee is obviously uneasy at what's going on but quite without confidence in condemning it. Running through the summary is the absurd implicit suggestion that ' the community ' or ' society ' will somehow evolve satisfactory standards for itself. It will have been noticed above that the standards ' held essential by the community ' must be protected against, apparently, the community. And again they say ' Society is trying to strengthen the home and the family by many aids such as courts, social legislation, home economics courses, and the church.' The suggestion here of organization amongst casually united or squabbling factions is ludicrous. Out of the whole summary comes the Committee's pathetic conviction that, although they don't know where they want to go, community effort helped by science will somehow get them there.

This is the burden of Dr. Cattell's book too.[1] Because of this one is in danger of overlooking the immense pains that must have gone to the accumulation of an imposing mass of sociological and psychological information. In his book the same lopsidedness and retarded cultural development evident in *Recent Social Trends* leads not to uneasiness but to earnest enthusiasm and hope. Everything, he thinks, is clear. Or soon would be if only we would let the psychologists and sociologists experiment with us for a time. ' Sexual ethics, like other moral rules, can be derived from biological considerations by careful research and reasoning. Although there is need for much more experiment, it seems safe to conclude that divorce by mutual consent, the institution of trial marriage, greater freedom in sexual relationships and other changes not involving dysgenic effects or loss of social purposefulness, ought to be socially recognized.' (Among the authorities he quotes in this connection are H. G. Wells on ' Secret Places of the Heart ' and the Women's Co-operative Guild on ' Maternity '.) The standard by which he arrives at these conclusions is given early in the book. ' The primary ideal of social life from which all others are derived, can only be that of forward Evolution.' ' Living

[1] *Psychology and Social Progress,* by R. B. Cattell (The C. W. Daniel Company, 15/- net).

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things,' he explains in more detail, ' have constantly tended to evolve " higher " organisms, more and more complex forms of life, capable of greater control over their environment and over the " lower " forms.' It is by these criteria, presumably, that we judge between the Goths and the Romans, or say Delius and Mr. Henry Ford. It seems, unfortunately, that the two criteria do not always go together and that what might be regarded as more complex forms of life are not necessarily capable of greater control over their environment. It is not surprising that in coming to a discussion of art and culture Dr. Cattell has to admit that by his criteria ' at first sight it is difficult to see what use cultural competition can be to the groups concerned, or how it can lead to any real natural selection among groups.' After a short discussion however he concludes that ' In truth, though the relationships are here less obvious and more in the psychological realm, the effect on group survival is no less real. Firstly, art is an aid to sublimational education: it raises the general level of expression of instinctive energy, makes possible nobler integrations of character, and thereby results in a better directing of national mental activity and greater " wisdom " in all fields. Secondly, it increases national prestige in the eyes of other nations, producing an attitude which reacts favourably in economic spheres, favours the formation of alliances in time of war, and assists potently in the direct spread of that nation's culture.' It is perhaps only fair to give an instance of the more practical suggestions that Dr. Cattell has to make. The most impressive, occuring in the chapter headed ' The Control of Destiny ' is that a nation like Great Britain should be divided into ' sociological experimental groups.' ' England and Scotland might have decided to adopt a dual group formation—a northern and a southern community . . . Then there might be mooted in the southern group the question as to whether the existent rate of increase of income-tax with salary was the best socially and eugenically, or again whether the school-leaving age ought or ought not to be raised by one year, or whether divorce ought to be granted on demand or only after twelve months' notice. Two counties might be chosen sufficiently similar in economic condition, such as Dorset and Somerset. One would then be put under the first system and the other under the second. The people desiring one system would, as far as possible, migrate to the county in which

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their preferred system was at work. Then the social and economic effects of the two systems could be accurately compared over a period as long as one or two generations if necessary.' ' For if the believers in action '—but this is only Matthew Arnold—' who are so impatient with us and call us effeminate, had had the same good fortune, they would, no doubt, have surpassed us in this sphere of vital influence by all the superiority of their genius and energy over ours. But now we go the way the human race is going, while they abolish the Irish Church by the power of the Nonconformists' antipathy to establishments, or they enable a man to marry his deceased wife's sister.' One wonders whose confidence has been the more misplaced, Matthew Arnold's or Dr. Cattell's.

D. W. HARDING.

THE RIGOUR OF THE GAME

THE DYNAMICS OF EDUCATION, A Methodology of Progressive Educational Thought, by Hilda Taba, Ph.D. (Kegan Paul, 10/6d.).

Many truths could be quoted from Dr. Taba's book which a reader of *Scrutiny* would be tempted to applaud. ' The influence of metaphysics has identified units of study with ultimate existential reality ; while the authority of the natural sciences has forced their last unit . . . on sciences of an entirely different type and purpose, requiring consequently different types of units.' We anticipate discussion of the relevance of mental tests to education ; some comment, perhaps, on the ' subject ' system which leaves uneducated students to spend three years further incapacitating themselves in the pursuit of indigestible information ; perhaps even some discussion of the distinction between intelligence and what is measured by I.Q.s. Interpreting her abstractions in this way, we find a great deal of which to approve. But so too would a variety of people—Dr. Norwood, Mr. Bertrand Russell, any Rotarian, the German and Soviet ministers for education, and indeed anyone able to endure her curious vocabulary. The discussions we hoped for never appear ; or if they do, they are phrased in the same impossible polysyllables. ' Activity is not merely

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reactivity ; it is also creativity.' And (habit prompts us to add) these Three are One. It *is* all a word-cult. Her statements are not so much untrue (often, indeed, they look so dismally true that one sighs for a little innocent flirtation with Error) as meaningless. Dr. Taba maintains her flight in magnificent if lonely abstraction, refusing to come down and show her credentials. On the rare occasions when she does condescend to a concrete noun, it is of the order of ' pleasurable supper or nice music,' or ' the act of climbing a fence in order to reach an apple.'

An abstraction is of no importance out of relation to the many sensitive, concrete perceptions out of which it has grown. The value of the abstraction will depend directly on the sensitiveness of the perceptions ; and with Dr. Taba (as so often) there seems to be something wrong with the perceptual end of the process. ' The activity of a boy who is going fishing is directed by certain environmental elements important in the case of fishing . . .' This is true enough ; but if we translate it into the standard dialect, we are left with nothing perceptibly more acute than the statement that a library is a lot of books. One may not be qualified to feel more than uneasy about Dr. Taba's standing as a psychologist and philosopher ; and she may, of course, be perfectly well equipped to solve various *specific* teaching problems ; but in the absence of evidence of any more penetrating insight, one is justified in discounting her as a theorist on education. She exemplifies a certain widespread habit of hygienic, rootless ratiocination that looks as though it is concerned with education, might equally be concerned with agriculture, and is in fact concerned with nothing at all. Mere grinding will not bring out of the machine material that was never put in: all these logical pangs, perversely enjoyed for their own sake, are apt to yield a pathetic mouse. It is difficult to see that a concern for education—even of a kind to express itself in methodologies—which rotates on itself where it should be centred on to-morrow morning is anything more than a polite recreation.

RAYMOND O'MALLEY.

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SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN YOUNG CHILDREN, by S. S. Isaacs (Routledge, 15/- net).

This second volume of three based on the records of the Malting House School, Cambridge, has exceptional importance for psychologists and educationists who want to form some conclusion on the significance of psycho-analytic theories for their own work. Dr. Isaacs adopts the courageous procedure, only too rare in psycho-analytic writings, of presenting practically the whole of the evidence on which her views are based ; most psycho-analyists, one feels, present only a selection of their trumps, the best of which remain up their sleeves. Dr. Isaacs shows her hand: the early part of the book consists in records of the children's doings and sayings and illustrates amply the themes of hostility, jealousy, rivalry, guilt, rudimentary interest in sex, and the fascination of excretion ; less ample illustration is also given of friendliness and co-operation. Frequent quotation from Bridges' *Social and Emotional Development of the Pre-School Child* confirms the broad features of the data, and this part of the book provides proof—if that is needed—of the existence of those facts of early life to which psycho-analysis has drawn attention.

Dr. Isaac's interpretation of these facts—the second part of the book—follows Freudian theory in its less recondite formulations, and there is little doubt that the Freudian theory fits the facts. What is not clear, however, is that no other theory would do as well. Again and again the Freudian explanation is given, as if it were inevitable, for facts which could undoubtedly be interpreted in a different way. After a valuable discussion of ' the motive of possession,' for example, Dr. Isaacs asserts, but as if stating a deduction or an axiom, ' The ultimate situation from which the wish to own arises is, of course, that of the infant at the breast . . .' And again, ' And to bite and swallow a thing is for long the only sure way of retaining it . . . This is the ultimate form of ownership, from which all others are derived.' It is in this dogmatic discovery of the *origin* of a propensity in its early *manifestations* that the weakness of the argument lies. As Dr. Isaacs seems half to realize herself, there is an inconsistency between this conclusion and the threat she reports one child to have made: ' I'll cut you up and eat you.' ' Here,' she notes in parenthesis, ' we see that

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eating is not merely the surest form of ownership, but also the most effective means of getting rid of one's enemy! ' It is obvious that what we know as acquisitiveness, aggressiveness, and love could all be experienced in rudimentary form by the infant at the breast ; these forms of desire are presumably differentiated out from the merely ' massive ' earlier experience which is no single one of them. To assume that the early manifestations of a propensity have some explanatory force, and that later manifestations are ' derived ' from them, seems simply to be fallacious. The same tendency to ' derive ' everything appears in the analysis of the motives behind giving and being helpful: ' We have the same situation when Harold generously offers to pull the others round the room on the blanket-boat. He obviously got great pleasure from being able (*i.e.* powerful enough) to be unselfish, to pull the rug with the others on it.' This one can well believe. But then Dr. Isaacs goes on, in intended explanation, ' In doing so, he became the omnipotent and loving father, they the children made good by the good father's gifts. He became the sort of father to them that he would have his own father be to him.' Even supposing some connection to have existed between this action and the boy's relations with his father or any adult, real or imagined, we still have no proof of a causal connection. So, too, Dr. Isaacs' belief in the super-ego (as something more than a picturesque metaphor) and in extreme forms of the mechanism of projection seems to be a matter of faith and not compelled by the data.

Where Dr. Isaacs for a time abandons explanation by remote derivation, and is content to interpret behaviour in the light of the more accessible features of the child's situation, her analysis of motives is admirably subtle and convincing. Her account of jealousy is especially good, and contrasts strikingly with the crude and sketchy analysis of it along behavioristic lines which J. B. Watson gives (in, I believe, *Behaviorism*). Many who hesitate to accept Freudian formulations will be grateful to them for giving Dr. Isaacs a framework on which to base her own valuable contribution.

In her last section, on the educational significance of child analysis, Dr. Isaacs makes clear the folly of mixing up the process of education with the process of analysis, whatever the implications of the one may be for the other. A rather full quotation on this

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point may very well close a review of a book which both psychologists and educators will read with the utmost interest and appreciation, though perhaps not with complete assent: 'The serious risk when any person, with an active relation to the child, makes attempts to get below the surface of the child's mind in the pursuit of his ordinary relation, is that it is really impossible to know what the effect may be, what immense conflicts he may be stimulating, and what immense charges of feeling, positive and negative, he may be drawing to his own person, without ever being able to disperse these again by tracing them to their sources in the real experiences of infancy.

'All this holds good, not only of the educator of young children, but of all who deal with adolescents, too. The adolescent boy or girl stands in great need of real help and understanding on the part of older men and women. And this understanding can be very deep in its quality without touching the true unconscious. It should not attempt to touch the true unconscious, it should not attempt to explain conscious wishes and day-dreams and conflict in terms of unconscious motives and complexes. The explosive material of the unconscious can only safely be handled by trained analysts working in the proper technically controlled analytic environment.'

D. W. HARDING.

THE EXPANDING UNIVERSE, by Sir Arthur Eddington (C.U. Press, 3/6d.).

THE NEW BACKGROUND OF SCIENCE, by Sir James Jeans (C.U. Press, 7/6d.).

THE LIMITATIONS OF SCIENCE, by J. W. N. Sullivan (Chatto & Windus, 7/6d.).

Sir Arthur Eddington gives a simple account of the Friedmann-Lemaitre model of the universe and the evidence in its favour. This he links up, in the last chapter, with his own theory of the electron and proton.

The book is written with that wit and lucidity characteristic of Eddington when writing of science. He says 'Except for one lapse, I have avoided questions savouring of philosophy,' but his

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manner of presentation suggests that this is the result of avoiding irrelevancies rather than leaving gaps: it is refreshing to find the quantum theory for once doing some useful work—not basking in waves of probability.

The last chapter is both the most interesting and the most obscure. It is an account of Eddington's own contribution to wave-mechanics (a name for the new quantum theory), in which he connects the inequality of mass in the proton and electron with their total number in the universe and the curvature of space-time, incidentally suggesting an explanation of the complex atomic nuclei and the newly-discovered neutron. This theory is not universally accepted in detail, nevertheless is by far the deepest addition yet made to wave mechanics.

The earlier part of the book is almost improperly simple. It is well to remember that the separation of *space* from space-time in the theory of relativity is a matter of convention and is not unique ; further that, in the general theory, for the universe as a whole, any convention is a makeshift whose suitability is a matter of the astronomer's taste, and, until we know the convention, statements about space are meaningless. On page 78 Eddington says: ' In this book I speak of space and time as entirely distinct, and treat simultaneity as uniquely defined ; it is to be understood that I am using a system of reference given by the universe as a whole . . . I claim no more for this frame than that it is convenient ; in particular simultaneity (as defined by it) has no particular philosophical significance.' His system is determined by the requirement that the average speed of matter shall be small in it ; this requirement can be satisfied in the Lemaitre model—in its later stages—but, if the actual universe is of a still more general type, there can be no sense in speaking of the *whole* of space at all. The importance of stating the convention is shown by the de Sitter model: at first space was interpreted as having a constant volume (at the expense of irregular behaviour in time): by the present convention, this model comes at the extreme of the expanding series.

Eddington's date for creation I find unsatisfactory. All *dates* suffer through belonging to an arbitrary time-system—except one from which all directions would be temporal, so that space might be said to be a point. The main business of creation is clearly the affair of wave-mechanics, and only thus should God—that is

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to say, the laws of probability—be allowed to enter into the scheme.

Sir James Jeans gives a general account of the theory of relativity and wave-mechanics ' against a roughly sketched background of rudimentary philosophy—the philosophy of a scientist, not of a metaphysician.' He argues that the problems of philosophy, formerly of academic interest only, have now become of urgent importance to Science as a result of modern physical discoveries: and he attempts partial answers to these problems. The conclusion is that wave-mechanics, though its results are good, is still without any neat interpretation: but that the universe is, in some way, shown to be more mental than it seemed under mechanism.

His metaphysics suffers, I think, from a confusion of systems. In addition to F. H. Bradley, who is frequently quoted, he seems much influenced by an analogy in which he compares the mind to a man in a prison cell communicating by telephones with the outside world. I find his use of such words as ' objective ' and ' subjective ' obscure. As an instance I may give what he, apparently, considers a criterion of objectivity: ' This system of waves is of course wholly objective ; it cannot represent subjective knowledge for the simple reason that we no longer have any.'

Jeans appears to me to raise metaphysical difficulties where a mathematical explanation would be more appropriate. On page 146 he says: ' This quotation from Bradley raises a metaphysical dilemma which science alone cannot claim to solve. If the whole continuum is finite, what can there be outside the continuum except more continuum?—which proves that our original continuum was not the whole continuum.' A little mathematics is all that is needed, but Jeans gives a vague philosophic answer which seems to me quite inadequate.

In contrast with his metaphysical humility, Jeans displays about scientific facts and theories a sureness reminiscent of the 19th century. Certainty is not claimed, but the laws of probability are introduced, as expert witnesses, to supply odds of ' unthinkable millions to one.'

J. W. N. Sullivan is concerned as much with his emotional as his intellectual reactions to science, and therefore considers a wider field than mathematical physics, in which, until the advent of the ' Principle of Indeterminacy,' the only subject of emotional value was the second law of Thermodynamics. Sullivan also

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discusses biology and psychology, and gives a general history of the development of scientific method out of primitive thought.

In the chapters on physics he gives an account of many of the problems treated by Jeans and Eddington in their popular books, and quotes widely from their general conclusions. He is very much less technical, however, and his general attitude is different from theirs, so that new connections are brought out. Throughout the book the influence of Dr. Whitehead is apparent.

In conclusion, I may say, that Mr. Sullivan gives a ray of hope to readers of popular science: Kepler's absurd metaphysics interfered in no way with his skill as an astronomer.

C. A. MEREDITH.

WAR: CAN THE INTELLIGENT STOP IT?

THE INTELLIGENT MAN'S WAY TO PREVENT WAR, edited by Leonard Woolf (Gollancz, 5/- net).

There is only one mode of action by which war can be prevented, and that is political. Whether the causes of war be economic, psychological or organizational, in the immediate situation only pressure on governments will prevent governments from fighting. It follows that those individuals who view the thought of war with distaste, but are doing nothing to combine with others to impress their opinion on authority, cannot be serious. If the danger of war confronts us in the present as distinct from some speculative future, the only question of immediate importance is the kind of pressure on governments that is likely to be most effective.

That is where this book is weak. It is a magnificent repository of facts, it is a highly intelligent commentary on the way the world has been going these last fifteen years, it offers really useful guidance to those who wish to know what sort of policy governments should pursue. But it does practically nothing to help the isolated man who feels vaguely that governments are pursuing a wrong policy which may possibly lead us into a war before the views expounded in this book shall have become practical politics through majorities at general elections. Only Lord Cecil, of the contributors to this book, discusses this matter, and he takes the view

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that, though unofficial organizations can do much to form opinion, everything really depends on our getting governments that will develop peace organization. Unofficial bodies, he says, are unlikely to enter into action against their governments, especially in moments of war crisis, because such action would partake of the nature of rebellion. If Lord Cecil's view is correct, he ought to have gone on to say how in this country we are to get a government that will develop international peace organization and not sabotage it. There are only two kinds of government possible in this country in the near future: a Conservative-National Government and a Labour Government. One can quite understand that people who, like Lord Cecil, share the Labour view of peace policy, but do not share its other views, find it difficult to urge the country to vote Labour. But we may as well face it: if our preventing war depends on our having a government that will in general carry out the policy Lord Cecil wants, there is nothing else to do. He himself roundly condemns the policy of the present Government, because in his view it has steadily undermined the peace position. Experience in this country has shown that there is an assurance of at least a serious effort towards the policy Lord Cecil thinks essential, when we have a Labour Government. Frankly, if the issue turns on the nature of government, we in this country have only one choice: that between a government approving the policy of Sir John Simon and a government approving the policy of Mr. Henderson. To refuse to be partisan in such a matter is to be futile.

There is an interesting discrepancy in this book between the views of Professor Laski and those of the other contributors. Professor Laski believes that the very nature of capitalist society makes peace practically impossible. Because of the unequal distribution of the return of industry between wages and salaries on the one hand, and rent, interest and profits on the other, there will always be a surplus of capital looking round for profitable investment. This leads to imperialist development, and as the state invariably tends to back up the ' interests ' of its nationals, ultimately to conflict with other imperialisms. The great wars of the past fifty years have been primarily clashes between such imperialisms, and the League of Nations, useful in small matters, has broken down when confronted with the imperialist hostilities of the great powers. Mr. Laski feels that only a federation of

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Socialist states is likely to organize world peace on a permanent basis.

The other contributors do not share this view. Mr. Roden Buxton discusses it very reasonably. He admits that imperialism has been the biggest single menace to peace in the last half century, but he argues that the building of national states has shown that political machinery can be constructed in spite of the temporary hostility of sectional economic interests, and, further, that there is no reason to assume even that imperialist states will always put their short-range interests before those long-range interests of which war is the greatest menace. This view is that especially of Sir Norman Angell also.

The rest of the book is a most able and thorough discussion of the policy that governments should pursue. For importance of subject matter and conspicuous ability in treatment I would say that it is quite the best of Mr. Gollancz's ' Intelligent Men.' But I return to what I feel is its one weakness. It badly needs an Appendix, giving a list of all the various organizations in England which are conducting work against war, with a statement of their aims and activities, so that the average ' intelligent man ' can make his choice amongst them.

What are they? On the political side, there is the Labour Party, which is pledged by its Annual Conference to take no part in war and to resist it with its whole strength. There is the League of Nations' Union (15 Grosvenor Crescent, S.W.1), which organizes opinion in favour of the League of Nations and draws its membership from all parties. There is the No More War Movement (55 Long Acre, W.C.2), which works for ' the removal of all causes of war, and the establishment of a new social order,' by printed and other propaganda. There is the War Resisters' International, which organizes individuals pledged personally to take no part in war, whatever the decision of their own governments. There is the ' Amsterdam and Bermondsey ' Anti-War Council (53 Grays Inn Road), which regards the League of Nations as a capitalist device and seeks to organize opinion among the working classes against the wars waged by capitalist governments. The last three sometimes collaborate. There is the National Peace Council (39 Victoria Street), which publishes a monthly and provides a clearing house for such societies as these. There is the Union of

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Democratic Control (34 Victoria Street), which published *The Secret International*—a pamphlet valuable in schools, which is the most vulnerable point at which to begin the task of educating public opinion. Occasions such as the recent Anti-War Exhibition in Cambridge provide these bodies and others with an opportunity of presenting a united front.

For all these organizations (and there may be others) there is something to be said ; and upholders of one point of view may feel also that there is something to be said against some of those who uphold a different one. But to be really useful to the ' intelligent man ' (who often feels himself sadly isolated) there should have been some discussion of such movements, even if only in terms of the opinion they are trying to form and apart from action they wish to take. But I think that too should have been included. For it is only by a constant and direct concern with action, to make his opinions effective, that the Intelligent Man's intelligence is likely to be anything more than his own private diversion.

H. L. ELVIN.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

W. H. AUDEN's latest book, *A Dance of Death,* has just been published by Faber and Faber (2/6d.).

HENRI FLUCHERE, who has recently published *Crise de Foi* (a play, produced at Marseilles), is writing a book on D. H. Lawrence and is assisting in the translation of Lawrence's *Letters.*

D. W. HARDING has recently joined the staff of the London School of Economics.

L. C. KNIGHTS has taken up a post at Manchester University.

RAYMOND O'MALLEY is teaching at Dartington Hall.

HUGH GORDON PORTEUS is literary editor of the *Twentieth Century.*

DENYS THOMPSON is bringing out *Reading and Discrimination* with Chatto and Windus this spring.

E. M. WILSON has published a translation of the *Solitudes* of Gongora with the Minority Press.

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